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FAMILY LIVING EXPENDITURES IN CANADA

CHARLOTTETOWN, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

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At the last session of Parliament, authorization was given for an investigation by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics of nutrition and family living expenditures in typical Canadian cities. In October and November surveys were accordingly made under the direction of Hon. W. D. Euler, Minister of Trade and Commerce, in twelve cities representing all the provinces of the Dominion. Summary results from these surveys are now available separately for each city, and will be supplemented by reports presenting a complete statement of findings. The present statement covers the city of Charlottetown, P.E.I., and other statements are also being released at this time for Halifax, Saint John, Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, London, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Edmonton and Vancouver.

Records in Charlottetown were collected for the year ending September, 1938, from families of British origin, with both parents and from one to five children present in the home; in some cases one lodger also lived with the family. The earnings of families in the sample ranged from \$450 to \$2,500 per annum. Within these limits families were selected at random so as to present as nearly as possible an accurate picture of typical levels of living. The 54 families selected in Charlottetown averaged 4.7 persons of which 2.4 were children.

Records from these 54 typical wage-earner families show that 59 per cent of total living expenditure was devoted to goods usually classed as necessities. Approximately 25 per cent was spent on foods, 15 per cent upon shelter, 8 per cent for fuel and light, and 11 per cent upon clothing. Another 9 per cent was devoted to the maintenance of the home, and 6.5 per cent to health and personal care. Slightly less than 6 per cent spent on recreation was greater than the combined expenditures upon education, community welfare and gifts outside of the family circle. Only 17 of the families owned motor cars, and the average amount spent per family on current operating costs and the purchase of cars was just 4.5 per cent of total family expenditure, while less than one per cent was taken by other forms of transportation. Average family savings (including life insurance premiums, and re-payment of obligations incurred in years preceding) amounted to \$157, or slightly more than 10 per cent of the expenditure total. Balanced against this amount was an average of \$104 per family owing on accounts contracted during the survey year.





Arrangement of records according to progressive income per person groups revealed some noteworthy differences in the composition of families and their economic circumstances. The average age of the father was close to 38 years in all income groups but the number of children per family dropped steadily from 3.3 in the group with income of from \$100 to \$199 per person to 1.5 children for families with income from \$500 to \$599 per person. The corresponding averages of annual income per family increased from \$815 to \$1,880 in these respective groups, and the number of rooms per person mounted from .9 to 1.9. There was a sharp drop in the percentage of expenditure upon foods from 36 to 17 corresponding with the rise in income per person from \$100-199 to \$500-599. Clothing percentages showed a more moderate decrease, but the expenditure pattern for other budget groups at successive income per person levels did not appear so closely related to the amount of income.

Distribution of Annual Living Expenditures for 54 Charlottetown Wage-Earner Families  
(Year ending September 30, 1938)

Budget Group	\$	Percentage of Total Expenditure
Food .....	390	25.3
Housing .....	233	15.1
Fuel and Light .....	120	7.7
Clothing .....	171	11.1
Household Operation and Furnishings .....	140	9.1
Health and Personal Care .....	99	6.5
Education, Welfare, Gifts .....	64	4.2
Recreation .....	91	5.9
Savings* .....	157	10.2
Motor Car .....	69	4.5
Other Transportation .....	6	0.4
<b>TOTAL .....</b>	<b>1,540</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\* Includes life insurance premiums and re-payment of obligations incurred prior to the survey year; amounts still owing on current accounts averaged \$104 per family, and a small portion of expenditures was also financed by reducing bank balances and the sale of property.

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