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DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND COMMERCE

FAMILY LIVING EXPENDITURES IN CANADA

SAINT JOHN, NEW BRUNSWICK.

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 Saint John, N.B., and other statements are also being released at this time for Charlottetown, Halifax, Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, London, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Edmonton and Vancouver.

Records in Saint John 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 78 families selected in Saint John averaged 4.5 persons of which 2.4 were children. This compares with an average of 4.2 persons and 1.9 children per household shown by the 1931 census.

Records from these 78 typical wage-earner families show that 64 per cent of total living expenditure was devoted to goods usually classed as necessities. Approximately thirty per cent was spent on foods, 17 per cent upon shelter, 7 per cent for fuel and light, and 10 per cent upon clothing. Another 6 per cent was devoted to the maintenance of the home, and 6 per cent also to health and personal care. Slightly more than 4 per cent spent on recreation was almost equal to the combined expenditures upon education, community welfare and gifts outside of the family circle. Only 18 of the families owned motor cars, and the average amount spent per family on current operating costs and the purchase of cars was just 3.7 per cent of total family expenditure, while another 1.1 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 \$126, or 9 per cent of the expenditure total. Balanced against this amount was an average of \$45 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

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circumstances. The average age of the father was close to 40 years in all income groups but the number of children per family dropped steadily from 3.4 in the group with income of from \$100 to \$200 per person to 1.6 children for families with income from \$500 to \$600. per person. The corresponding averages of annual income per family increased from \$864 to \$1,971 in these respective groups, and the number of rooms per person mounted from .9 to 1.8. There was a sharp drop in the percentage of expenditure upon foods from 42 to 21 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 78 Saint John Wage-Earner Families
(Year ending September 30, 1938)

Budget Group	\$	Percentage of Total Expenditure
Food	424	30.1
Housing	239	17.0
Fuel and Light	103	7.3
Clothing	141	10.0
Household Operation and Furnishings	84	6.0
Health and Personal Care	83	5.9
Education, Welfare, Gifts	79	5.6
Recreation	61	4.3
Savings*	126	9.0
Motor Car	53	3.7
Other Transportation	15	1.1
TOTAL	1,408	100.0

* Includes life insurance premiums and re-payment of obligations incurred prior to the survey year; amounts still owing on current accounts averaged \$45 per family, and a small portion of expenditures was also financed by reducing bank balances and the sale of property.

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