

# How We Managed

By CHARLES M. ENJEIAN

**T**HE accompanying chart is computed from figures compiled from practical indulgence and shows our actual experience to the penny.

The standard of living pursued is budgeted as economically as possible and yet maintain a home and rear children fit physically and mentally to become American citizens of American standards.

While the food selected in this program is well proportioned as a balanced diet, supplying sufficient calories for sustenance—it need not be necessarily adhered to as an iron rule. Being a cosmopolitan race of people, we have hereditary likes and dislikes in foods; some may be accustomed to more vegetables and less meat, or vice-versa. Some may prefer pastry, less cereals, and so on. It would not be humane to dictate to people and compel them to revolutionize their lives and modes of living. It would also be as disastrous to change a person's acclimated form of diet as it would be to transfer an Eskimo from the Arctic Region to the Equatorial Zone. However, finally, a formula may be adopted for all and satisfactory results will be obtained.

According to this chart, in round numbers \$.56 will finance one life a day. Assuming there are eight in the family, eight times \$.56 equals \$4.48 per day expense for the entire family; seven days times \$4.48 equals \$31.36 or a week's expenses. Of this amount, not more than 39 percent or \$12.23 should be spent for housing, heat, light and gas—another 39 percent or \$12.23 for foods, fruit, and so on, and 22 percent or \$6.89 for clothes, recreation and medicine. Of course the necessity for medical attention cannot be computed until misfortune happens. But over an aggregate time the allotted amount will amply carry. When this amount will not carry, the case is accidental, and accidents are somewhat beyond human control.

Where membership in a family is less than six it will take 5 percent additional cost for each person less than six. This is caused by the fact that light, heat, gas, walls and roof will house one or ten persons with practically the same efficiency. In a case where ten reap the benefit, the ratio of expense per person is less per capita than when one is using these facilities.

These figures are compiled from the routine expenditures of a normal family. All figures are taken during the time when the depression was at its greatest depth; therefore they are conservative. I give below a few comments to explain some of the sections of the chart on the opposite page.

**HOUSING.** Five rooms are absolutely necessary to house three adults and three children and maintain them in the hygienic manner; to avoid unnecessary sickness, five rooms even in the cheapest locality and amongst the old buildings cannot be rented under \$20 per month at the present average tax rates of all municipalities.

**HEATING.** Five rooms to

the required 68 degrees to 70 degrees F., which is normal for human housing, will consume one ton of coal per month even with exceptional care in not being wasteful and using every precautionary move to conserve fuel.

**LIGHTING.** For proper diffusement of light it is recommended to use 75 watt bulbs in units of one, for illuminating a room. As a general rule two rooms are illuminated at one time, one in the kitchen for doing housework and the other in another room for the youngsters to prepare school work and cultivate their minds. The average time of consuming light is from 5 PM to 11 PM at retiring time, or six hours at 150 watts per hour, totalling 900 watts per day, thirty days per month, or 27,000 watts—27 kilowatts. Another 3 kilowatts is used through the month for the cellar, and so on, or total consumption of 30 kilowatts. The Public Service rates are 8 cents per kilowatt for domestic use . . . therefore \$2.40 per month for electrical current.

**GAS.** Gas is a necessity for cooking, heating milk, cereals, food, water, and so on. At the rates for this service charged by the Public Service the average is \$3.60 per month.

**MEDICINE, MEDICAL-DENTAL SERVICE.** These items are the least figured on, but one of the costliest and most necessary requirements of human life, especially in these so-called civilized and artificial modes of living.

**MILK.** It is considered by medical science as the most perfect food and really is required for the sustenance of all mammal species of life. Two quarts a day for three growing children is a minimum quantity. At 12 cents per quart—\$1.68 per week.

**BREAD.** Bread is a standard international food and appropriately advertised as the staff of life; however ill effects may be obtained if over-indulged in. For that reason two loaves a day for a family of six is sufficient. Two loaves a day will slice to two slices to each person per meal. Two loaves at 10 cents equals 20 cents per day or \$1.40 per week.

**SOAPS.** Soaps, toilet articles and antiseptics are needless to comment on in their daily needs in human life. Cleanliness is virtue next to godliness. We cannot be hygienically clean and healthy without the use of these products in the household, especially when 30 cents a week will do it.

**CLOTHES.** Two dollars per week or \$104 per annum, while seemingly a small amount to clothe and maintain clothes has by actual experience proved enough to get by for a family of six, provided caution, care and moderation be used.

**CHURCH, SOCIAL RECREATION.** These functions of life are as necessary to living as are the foods we assimilate. Rest of mind and nerves—divertisement—are required to maintain a healthy and active body. One should seek and adjust his activities in these fields in

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*"THIS budget was created by necessity," says the author, by calling, an advertising artist. But not even careful planning could bring the budget for six people, three adults and three children under thirteen, "accustomed to a very different standard of living," to \$18 a week, Mr. Enjeian's CWA wage as a draughtsman. "For the difference of \$5.23 a week I was," he points out, "obliged to become indebted."*

A Balanced Weekly Budget for Complete Maintenance of all  
 the relatives to life computed on a family of 6; 3 Adults; 3 Children.

H O S - N 4	Food	Neat	Light	Gas	Health Serv.	Total
①	5 Rice	1/4 Ton of Coal	illumination	Heating water Sparking ROOM	Doctor care medicine dental	10 total
②	\$4.60	\$3.15	Sugar	5 lbs. Rice per week.	\$1.50	\$10.95
③	2 qt. per day. 14 qt. per week.	Bread	5 lbs. sugar per week.	Potatoes, cabbage, tomatoes, carrots, spinach, etc., - adequate each week.	Vegetables	10 total
④	14 qt. per week.	2 loaves Sunday 14 per week. 2 slices per person a meal	2 1/2 doz. per week.	1 lb. per week.	lard fat & oil for cooking 1 lb. per week.	4.33
⑤	\$1.68	\$1.40	.25	.25	.75	
⑥	Meat	Coffee	Eggs	Butter	Fats	
⑦	beef, pork, fish, veal or chicken - adequate 1 or 2 each week.	3/4 lb. per week.	2 1/2 doz. per week.	1 lb. per week.	1 lb. per week.	1 total
⑧	⑪	⑫	⑬	⑭	⑮	\$3.50
⑨	\$2.00	.20	.90	.25	.15	
⑩	Cereals	Fruit	Soup	Clothes	Church, School, 5.5. - transport - 6 pennies per week.	1 total
⑪	corned, salted & spiced.	apples, oranges, milk, etc. - adequate.	7 rolls, etc. adequate.	400 wearing apparel to stock & underwear - 34¢ per week per person		4.50
⑫	.50	.70	.30	\$2.00	\$1.00	
⑬	⑭	⑮	⑯	⑰	⑱	23.28
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accordance with his finances. One dollar per week properly invested will supply clean, wholesome recreation.

These figures reveal that a total of \$23.28 will maintain an established home of six members with all bare necessities of life. This amount equals a total of \$3.88 per capita a week or 55 and 3/7 cents a day per person. Taking these figures into consideration we cannot help realizing that even under the regime of the present economic system, where profits and distribution are mercilessly unbalanced, the cost of living per person is but practically nil. Fifty-five cents per person for all necessities, should not be very difficult to earn or obtain.

Judging from the articles appearing every day in newspapers and periodicals, there is much difficulty in handling a program of relief to the afflicted public, or other projects to meet and fairly deal with all cases of distress.

There is no doubt that we are dwelling in depressed times, times where ample natural resources cannot find their proper channels to meet the demands of the masses, times where hundreds of millions of normal-bodied, normal-minded, energetic, willing men and women are in want of food, shelter, clothes and all the other necessities of life. What the reason for this condition is, is not the object of my submission, but how to efficiently and harmoniously handle existing projects,

to keep peace, good spirit, good will and clean atmosphere in our land, is more what we should seek to accomplish at this time. After this is accomplished, we should seek methods to keep this good will and spirit by more even distribution of natural resources and accomplishments of human efforts.

Inasmuch as the work relief is designed to facilitate an existence for the people until such times when private industry will assumedly absorb man power, why not use concrete methods? The required amount of cash necessary to give per person is easily computed; the number of people in a family cannot be concealed; therefore the required amount of cash for each family can be calculated; then why not give the heads of families only enough hours at respective rate of compensation for their type of work, to net them enough cash to meet their demands, in accordance with the accepted and recognized budget? By this method one who has two to support will not receive the same amount as one who has ten. Should both cases receive the same amount of cash, one can live in luxury—the other cannot exist. This is not a fair method of dealing with relief. This suggested method will also eliminate much of the possibility of partiality that naturally takes place. This method will also conserve the appropriated funds and stretch their usefulness to a much longer period of time.

## Poor Man's Justice

By GRACE OVERMYER

**A** POOR-MAN'S court," where suits involving less than \$50 may be quickly and inexpensively handled was established in New York City on September 1, under a bill passed by the regular session of the state legislature and promptly signed by Governor Lehman. While the Small Claims' Court will relieve congested court calendars, its main purpose, as Governor Lehman stated it, is "to give the poor people of New York City suitable court facilities for law suits involving small amounts." He added, "Under this bill it will also be possible to set up evening courts, so that people will not have to lose any pay or endanger their jobs when they have to go to court."

It is perhaps not generally known that for a good many years the State of New York, through its Labor Department, has maintained what is in effect a small-claims court. The activities of this Bureau of Labor Welfare center in the collection of wage claims, and though it lacks the full status of a court, it performs important court services simply and expeditiously. Its services are entirely free and it is state-wide in its operations, in these respects differing from the newly created "poor-man's court."

During 1933 the Bureau of Labor Welfare made wage collections for 10,924 working-men and women, the amounts ranging roughly from 75 cents to \$75, and totalling \$200,072.29. In ten years it has collected and returned nearly \$800,000, representing pay for services rendered, which workers otherwise would have lost.

Since 1924 the Bureau of Labor Welfare has been under the direction of Lillian R. Sire. To her direct and energetic methods, courage and resourcefulness, Frances Perkins, when industrial commissioner of New York, credited much of its success.

With Mrs. Sire or one of her assistants sitting as referee, weekly wage-claims hearings are held at the State Office Building, in New York City. All complaints are investigated, and if they are verified, the employer is served with a subpoena, bearing the red seal of the Labor Department, and a date is set for a hearing. If the employer wishes to contest the case he attends the hearing, often with an attorney. Complainants rarely have counsel.

Outside the hearing-room on a Wednesday morning one sees a motley crowd of claimants, waiting their turn. The first case called is typical—a dress-making group made up of a half dozen illiterate white girls, three colored girls and three or four slovenly white men and boys. The spokesman—a colored girl—produces piece-work tags and a time list to prove that wages have not been paid as promised. Some argument follows, but the merits of the case are clear.

**T**HE next claimants are waiters from a "dining-car" lunch stand—two young Italian men and an American woman, whose appearance and manner support her statement that she is a nurse unable to find work in her own field. The respondent is a Greek who speaks through a staff interpreter. His claim that he is the owner of the lunch-wagon, but not the proprietor of the stand, necessitates postponement for further evidence.

Then follows a grocery clerk, with a claim for \$1.71 for overtime; and after him a hotel dish-washer, his hands burned by lye water, who claims \$4.25—a half week's wages, unpaid because he left without notice. Through the morning a varied assortment passes in review. A young Italian boy, who has been working in a hole-in-the-wall shoe-shine parlor for three weeks without pay; a Negro coal-truck driver, who exhibits