

UP! UP! UP! THAT'S THE STORY OF THE COST OF LIVING

Prices of Ten Years Ago and Five Years Ago Compared With Prices Now

--One Need Not Pay More for Clothes or Rent Than Formerly, but the Increased Cost of Food Cannot Be Dodged

Table titled 'PRICES OF FOOD STAPLES COMPARED' showing prices for various items like Milk, Eggs, Butter, etc., comparing 1906, 1911, and 1916 prices.

Note: These are wholesale prices. They show what the retail butcher or grocer had to pay more, but they do not, of course, indicate what he charged more.

THE nightmare of the high cost of living has roused the bill payer from his worried slumber again. Announcement has been made that the price of milk is to go up a cent a quart, commencing October 1.

It is rather discouraging to try to get at facts. Ask any price maker for an explanation of why he has raised his prices and he will tell you that he has done it because some other price maker started raising first.

But despite the difficulties besetting the inquiry, it is possible to obtain a percentage of facts about the cost of living now as compared with five and ten years ago.

The reader will find here an account of these changes. They may give some comfort to the perplexed bill payer. They will show in some instances reports of big increases have been greatly exaggerated.

Food. You must pay more or eat less. Clothing. You must pay more or wear less—that is, a smaller quantity or a lower grade.

Summed up, it may be said that the bill payer need pay no more for clothing or home rent than he did in 1911. In fact he cannot do so.

Right at the threshold of the consideration of New York food prices, one fact the food prices of any city, the magic word "location" must be borne in mind.

The retail butcher pays a standard price for his meat. But there is no standard price with him when he is the seller. It is useless to seek a standard price.

Two butchers will each take a side from the same beef. One will sell it to Riverside Drive folk and he'll sell it mountain high.

Go to The Bronx and you get one price. Go to Brooklyn and you get another price. Go on one side of Manhattan and you pay 10 cents a pound more than you do on the other side.

Table titled 'COST OF CLOTHING' showing shifts in prices of wearing apparel shown in textiles and men's wearing apparel.

living must decide to pay more than formerly in order to get as good a suit, to take one of poorer quality or the old price or else to reduce the number of suits he buys.

"And I cannot see that there's much hope for the price of clothing coming down even after the war. You know prices are not raised by manufacturers until the thing is well considered.

"No, I can't see the price of men's clothing coming down very soon, if in years."

When the high cost of living with respect to the prices of women's apparel is considered a labyrinth of detail is encountered and it is practically impossible to get a basis to indicate the increase.

But one can divide into discussable classes the various kinds of women's apparel. It has been said that there are not half a dozen women's suits in New York exactly alike.

Then again the increase in the cost of women's apparel is reflected in the increase in the rates charged by the women's tailoring establishments.

The housing of the New Yorker is an important factor of living cost increase—if he permits it to become so.

Real estate men say that in general the flat or the apartment that cost a certain sum in 1906 costs not a cent more to-day—if the building of which it is a part is still standing.

The plan of this department for giving to the farmer a proper return for the production of milk has been criticized as radical.

The low price of money is at the foundation of the situation which confronts the farmer who has milk for sale.

The milk producer must pay more for his feed, for his implements, for everything connected with his business and necessarily he must be able to meet these conditions.

But it does not necessarily cause him to pay more rent. Remember—no necessarily. But it causes him to rent a more remote part of the city.

The first concern of the consumer is to get a plentiful and regular supply of wholesome milk at the lowest possible cost.

Now just as it is impossible to standardize the retail price of meat and other food products in New York because of locality, conditions and the individual purpose of the retailer, so it is impossible to standardize the rent figures of the city.

apartments of New York it is also impossible to determine whether a rent payer pays more now than he would have paid ten years ago.

"There is no doubt that rentals for high class apartments have gone up steadily in New York during the last few years, but in no case is it an out and out increase in cost for the same situation, accommodations and conveniences.

With respect to the higher priced apartments in New York at all in 1906. I speak of high prices by comparison with the top notchers of now.

JOHN J. DILLON  
FOOD AND MARKETS  
COMMISSIONER



HAS SOLUTION OF CITY'S FOOD PROBLEM  
Commissioner Dillon Offers Object Lesson in His Scheme for the Better Handling of Milk

PROPER distribution and standardization in the marketing of food supplies in this State and especially in the city of New York, where the means of conveying supplies to the consumer are primitive and inadequate, are at the bottom of any solution of the continuous problem of the high cost of living.

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"Now take the man who paid the top notch, or \$6,000, in 1911. You can't say that the price he paid for the identical apartment he occupies has gone up. That is not the case, so the high cost of living doesn't include the rent boost.

"If there are exceptional cases where a \$6,000 rental has advanced, the man who paid it can beyond all question get the same accommodations and in a first class neighborhood for the same money.

"The fact is each apartment is held to be worth the rental it brings not through a force, but because of its having some advantage that makes people wish to pay more money and get it.

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The materials that go to make up a milliner's "creation" have all advanced from 25 to 50 per cent, so that if a woman must have certain trimmings on her bonnet she will rip into the cost of living just to that 25 or 50 per cent.

As to women's ready-made suits, the manager of one of the best known Broadway shops stated that a serviceable serge suit that sold for \$24.74 in 1906 was sold for the same figure in 1911 and could be bought for the same figure to-day.

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Table titled 'LIGHTING AND HEATING NECESSARIES' showing prices for Anthracite coal, stove sizes, New York, per ton, and other items.