

the part of the workers and no great change in wages.

Also, Basch gave the commission the interesting information that "there are no empty stomachs in Chicago," a thing those with what they thought were empty stomachs doubtless will be glad to learn.

But where Basch got himself all into a tangle was in trying to explain how foolish a minimum wage law would be.

"You must take into account the apprentices and the idle and shiftless," he said. "I am very earnest now; very sincere. A minimum wage law might be good for some, but it would be bad for the 40 per cent of employes who are idle and shiftless."

"Hm," said O'Hara, "what do you do with girls whom you employ and who prove to be 'idle and shiftless?'"

"Why, we—ah—put ginger into them," said Basch.

"Quite so," said O'Hara, "and how do you put the 'ginger' into them? I ask because we found one factory where they put 'ginger' into girl employes by throwing them on the floor and things like that."

"Why, we have a school," said Basch, "which is under our superintendent and a number of very capable women. By precept and example, we teach the girl. Possibly the girl is not fitted for work in a store. We find that out."

The more Basch talked along this line, the more apparent it became that no "idle or shiftless" girl was allowed to hang around Siegel, Cooper & Co.'s, and Basch's 40 per cent of employes dwindled to 0 per cent.

"But I can assure you that the young girls are very glad to come to work for us for carfare or something like that," said Basch. "So are their mothers. They are very glad to have their girls learn how to work with us, and quite satisfied with small wages."

Basch then made the rather startling statement that \$5 a week is

the lowest wage paid any girl in Siegel, Cooper & Co.'s now.

Ed Lehman, with his too carefully brushed hair, and too carefully pressed clothes, and too carefull tyied tie, sleek and smiling, was even worse than Basch.

O'Hara asked him if it were not a fact that the average man who went to work for The Fair stood little or no chance of ever rising above \$17 a week.

"Why, no," said Lehmann. "I have known young fellows who began with us at \$6 a week and who now are making good money, very good money indeed."

"Yes, I know there are exceptions," said O'Hara. "But I'm talking about the average."

"Oh, of course, there are men whose intelligence is too low ever to be worth any more than \$15 a week or so, men of the lower class, who really belong to the laboring class. They haven't got the intelligence to be worth more than a small salary."

"I am talking about the average man," said O'Hara. "You told the commission a few minutes ago that the average salary paid your men employes is \$17.39 a week. Isn't it true the average man has no chance for more?"

Lehmann floundered hopelessly. "Well, you see," he said, at last, "in a big store everyone can't rise."

"How about a minimum wage law?" asked O'Hara.

Lehmann started the old song and dance about how a minimum wage law would be all right if it were national, but unfair if only state. Then he wandered on about how hard it was for millionaire merchants to make both ends meet, and what a lot of money they had to pay for advertising.

"I don't want to knock the newspapers," said O'Hara, "but I believe that the best advertisement any store on State street could get would