

chain stores has been so rapid that independent neighborhood stores have found it necessary to bring their prices in line with chain store prices. These factors and others have contributed to the establishment of standard prices for many important articles of food which has tended to reduce whatever differences in the cost of food existed between different sections of the country.

There still remains the question of price differentials between cities of different size which is supposedly due to the greater cost of doing business in large cities and to the greater cost of bringing commodities to the market. But even this difference appears to be exaggerated. The results of this study show that the highest cost of the food budget was found in New York City, but the second highest was Leominster, Massachusetts, the smallest city covered. In one, the population was 5,620,048, and in the other, 19,744. The weekly cost of the food budget in New York City was \$11.94 and in Leominster \$11.59, while at the other extreme it was \$10.70 in Marion, Ohio. Between the cities of highest and lowest cost there was a difference of only \$1.24 or 10.4%.

Food costs in the different cities are given in detail in Table 5. These data emphasize the remarkable uniformity in the costs of important articles in the food budget and make inevitable the conclusion that differences in prices of food staples have been frequently over-estimated. It would appear that differences in costs of significant proportions between different cities or sections are likely to be due to different living standards which call for different articles or different qualities of the same article in the various localities. Because of the large proportion of the entire budget cost which is assigned to food, this similarity in food costs has the effect of keeping to small proportions the differences between cities in the total cost of living.