

The Consumer Pays

Apropos of Government wastefulness and H. C. L. generally, "Truth" comments on the failure of the slump in prices to extend to the retail cost of food-stuffs, even though raw material is obtainable far more cheaply than it was a twelve-month ago. For example, says "Truth":—

Palm kernels and ground nuts are used for making margarine. The price of margarine to-day is just about the same as 12 months ago, while the price of ground nuts has dropped from £43 a ton to £17, and that of palm kernels from £40 10s. to £25 10s. Cocoa beans 12-months ago were £103 per ton, to-day, they are £40, but cocoa and chocolate are no cheaper. Palm oil is sold at £46 per ton instead of £90 10s., yet soap and candles have not dropped in price appreciably.

And what about the price of clothes? We seem to remember hearing of a big drop in wool and of Government orders for vast quantities of cloth being cancelled. We do not use margarine much in Shanghai, but the other things will be coming home to us, with the fall in silver. It will be a curious paradox that as prices decline at Home they rise in Shanghai but that is what we must expect. Already during the past two months there has been an appreciable increase in all household charges.