

The Cost of Living.

It is very easy and exceedingly convenient for one man to lay the blame for misfortune upon his neighbor. If my boy goes wrong he is not to blame. The children across the way have contaminated him. A correspondent complains that in last month's issue we did not hit the railway companies hard enough. In his opinion they are the chief cause of high living. It is well in a matter of this kind not to be too dogmatic, for the causes of distress are many. He who would find a solution must be broad in his outlook. Many factors co-operate in producing the conditions under which we labor at the present time. Take as an example the cost of bread.

1. The farmer may till the soil badly. In England an acre can yield twice as much as it does with us, and in Belgium two and a half times as much. Bread is high because the wheat crop is small for the labor spent in producing it.
2. The farmer may pay too much for his labor, his machinery may cost too much, or it may not last as it should because of neglect.
3. The cost of transportation may be too great, either because rates are too high or because the wheat-raising districts are too far away from the centres of population.
4. The railway rates may be high because a dividend has to be paid upon inflated stock. There is not a railroad in Canada to-day that is not over-capitalized—and many times over.
5. Speculators may get up a corner in wheat and raise the price. Often the price of wheat is purely fictitious—it bears no relation to its abundance on the market, and to its relative worth.
6. Strikes and lockouts may tie up trade, and profits of legitimate merchantmen may go to the winds. Some one must make up for the loss. In the last analysis the consumer pays the tax.
7. The middlemen may be too many and may charge too great a price for handling the grain in its raw or manufactured condition. Every unnecessary middleman is a burden on the community.
8. The miller may charge too high a rate because of bad management or greed. Millers may easily combine to keep up the price of flour. The same is true of the bakers.
9. Wages of workmen of all kinds may advance and this may add to the cost of the loaf of bread.
10. The prices of all merchantable articles may increase, for reasons given in last issue. Food, clothing and shelter must advance in cost as the prices for other articles increase.
11. One reason for the advance in price of most commodities is the artificial tariff. Make machinery, clothing, furniture, cheap and it will cost less to live. The producer can afford to take less and the great army of middlemen can be satisfied with less profit.

These are a few of the causes of the high price of bread—a price more than twice as great as is paid in the Motherland. We can remedy matters if we will—by making the producer and the consumer more easily meet each other. The experiments in open markets are very gratifying. Baltimore furnishes a good illustration. We can prevent inflated values for commodities by fighting trusts and encouraging municipal and public ownership generally. The watering of stock has as much to do with the advance of prices as any other thing.

Then, again, we should remember that because we are not preparing our young people for industrial pursuits, because they are workmen of the second and third class only, we must pay for it. Incompetency always lays an embargo on a community.

In all the reasons given we have said nothing about waste land, unearned increment, extravagance in government and extravagance of our people in general. These points were hinted at before. Nor have we referred to light weights and short measures although these may add to cost. The point to be recognized is this, that the cost of high living is due to many factors. In some cases intelligence will save us, in some cases we must revolutionize our methods and punish the thieves who are responsible for unfair additions to the burden of the working man. This punishment will not be meted out until we have grit enough to rise above party and elect to public office men who will truly represent the common people—the consumers in general—who are the sufferers under present conditions.

AS OTHERS SEE US.

Sometimes it is good for us to see ourselves as others see us. Here is what the "Country Gentleman" has to say about our homestead regulations:

This country does not appear to realize the seriousness of the migration to Canada or to understand the causes that underlie the loss of valuable population. It is time to wake up. Last year Canada received about 400,000 new settlers, of whom about 130,000 went from the United States. These figures are those of the American consul at Winnipeg. Now

GIVE US MEN!

JOSIAH C. HOLLAND.

GOD give us men! A time like this demands
Strong minds, great hearts, true faith, and
ready hands;

Men whom the lust of office does not kill;
Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy,
Men who possess opinions and a will;
Men who have honor and who will not lie,
Men who can stand before a demagogue
And scorn his treacherous flatteries without
winking,

Tall men, sun-crowned, who live above
the fog
In public duty and in private thinking.

we are told that the immigration in 1912 will break all records.

The prime cause is the greater liberality of Canada's homestead law. It provides that any one who is a citizen of the Dominion, or who has declared his intention to become such, may acquire a title to 160 acres of land by residing upon it for a period of three years, by building upon it a habitable house and by cultivating a substantial part of the ground each year. It also provides that during six months of each year the homesteader may leave his land and go elsewhere. This is most important. If he gets sick or runs behind in his finances the government helps him. It goes so far as to advance him seed and money.

In the United States our homestead law provides for a residence period of five years. During that time the settler must stay on his land or lose it. Nothing is done to help him. Experts and commissions have declared that the law ought to be changed. Secretary Fisher, of the Department of the Interior, says: "It is the man on the land who is essential." And he adds: "I think that the settler should get a title to his homestead just as soon as he has shown his good faith and has convinced the Government that he sincerely means to develop the land and help build up the community."

There is just one thing to add to this opinion. We are glad to get settlers of the right type such as the 40,000 settlers mentioned, but when it comes to

some of those from Central and Southern Europe our national welfare demands that they be here at least five years, and preferably ten years, before they are accorded the full rank of citizenship.

WHAT MAKES A DECISION VALUABLE?

One of the peculiar things about Justice Charbonneau's decision in the Hebert case is that he stands practically alone, and yet his judgment counts for more than all the others. This is because the others are seen to be surface judgments. The major premise is always assumed. Judge Charbonneau sought to establish all his premises before attempting to reach a conclusion. It may be that he was mistaken after all, but he certainly went about the matter in the right way. Many people are wondering where the talented writer of the Kingdom Papers comes in about this time.

CENSORSHIP.

No man would willingly give poison to his children. Yet there are hundreds of men who knowingly permit their children to receive every week that which poisons their minds beyond hope of remedy. The great poisoner is the unsupervised moving picture show. Not only are wrong ideals of manhood and womanhood presented, but scenes of murder, host and debauchery are presented in their most horrible form. I went into the most reputable of the shows the other day and for ten minutes saw over one hundred children gaze upon a scene in which a jealous woman poisoned her lover and then committed suicide. It does not help matters when deeds of heroism—always heralded by the waving of an American flag—are portrayed immediately afterward. The general effect of the whole thing is demoralizing. It is coming to this that the public have to enter upon this matter of education in a broader spirit. They must see to it, not only that children are under right supervision from nine to four, but all the time. Without exercising undue paternalism the state must do more to control the reading and amusement of its young people. And the public censors must be a little more discriminating. Even if they reject one picture in every ten, they must learn to reject nine in every ten if the effect produced is not wholesome and invigorating. Better have our children physically unsound than to have them morally corrupt.

THE FLAG.

The national significance of glorifying American flags in Canadian theatres is occupying not a little attention. The Montreal Witness is quite right in the following criticism: "Evidently the proprietors of some of the moving picture houses in the city are at last beginning to appreciate that the average British subject does not care to see the Stars and Stripes constantly before him, and to see his own flag put in the background, and even at times insulted. Something unfortunately new is that one of the leading picture theatres in the uptown district is at present treating its patrons to an English made film, which portrays the gallantry of two British tars in saving the Union Jack from insults by a gang of brigands. So scarce have been these films in the past that the appearance of this on the screen brought forth an outburst of enthusiasm seldom seen in a moving picture palace. The British made film is more numerous in Montreal now than before, and the audiences attest their appreciation of the change."

THE STRIKE.

The greatest and most lamentable strike of all times! Why in the name of all that is right should the miners and the owners try to settle this as if there were no third party to the problem? Why should not the third party—the suffering public—take over the mines, operate them, and sell the coal as cheaply as possible? Then would the country know whether the owners were true or false in their declarations as to profits. If the owners are right, let them add a little to the price of coal, but let not the children of the laboring men starve. The wage scale at present is absurd.