

HIGH COST OF LIVING.

A letter on the subject of the High Cost of Living was received from the North Vancouver City Council, August 4, 1919, by the Convention as follows:

The Council of the City of North Vancouver desires to submit for the consideration of the Convention the following article and recommendations, which recommendations they believe would, if adopted and put into effect, materially aid in reducing the present cost of living.

The Cause.

We submit that the principal root of the evil is the present wasteful, inefficient and antiquated method, or rather lack of method, of distributing the goods from the producer or manufacturer to the consumer—wasteful of time, labor, health, happiness and even human life—inefficient and antiquated in this age and to such an extent that even the huge economies effected by the greatest array of labor saving machinery the world has ever seen are in a large measure rendered null and void. An ever-increasing army of unregulated distributors and relatively an ever-decreasing army of producers with the leaders of all these practising profiteering and price manipulation as their fancy may dictate or opportunity permit.

Among the minor causes are the various classes of idlers and users, who in devious ways levy toll on labor and industry. Waste of time in high schools and colleges teaching dead languages and other impractical subjects to the partial or total exclusion of vocational training, economics and useful branches of learning which would be of greater value for purposes of mind-development and discipline and thereafter more useful to the individual and the country.

Desired Object.

Keeping in mind that the chief object to be attained is a substantial reduction of the cost of living generally, but without increase in hours of labor or reduction of wages, it must be obvious that genuine economies of considerable magnitude must be effected in methods of distribution, especially if we assume that production is on a fairly efficient basis and the producer has no undue advantage.

The appointment and maintenance in each province of a permanent Government Commission of say three members with adequate mandatory and judicial powers to effectively administer, regulate and carry into effect the following regulations and constructive reforms relative to the distribution of all farm and factory products and raw material, including all kinds of foodstuffs, clothing, fuel, farm machinery and implements, household furniture, lumber and building material.

Regulations.

1. The permanent abolishment of all forms of profiteering cornering, price manipulation, wasteful methods of competition and unnecessary advertising.
2. Limiting the number of channels of distribution and elimination of unnecessary handling and all sources of waste in distribution.
3. Abolishment of the numerous and expensive forms of intermediary commission sales and selling agencies in so far as they may be found in conflict with economical distribution and substituting therefor direct sales from the producer to recognized wholesale and retail distribution centres or units in the several cities and districts or direct to the consumer.
4. Limitations of the number of wholesale distribution units and the number of retail and local distributors to the minimum of actual requirements.
5. Re-establishing the general right of purchase for cash either direct from the factory and or the wholesale units in authorized quantities and at authorized cash prices.
 - (a) by any consumer.
 - (b) by any distributor whether wholesale or retail.
6. The Government Commission in each province to fix and revise from time to time the cash selling prices, exclusive of delivery charges, in the several cities and districts on the basis of a fair added percentage margin over actual cost to cover average handling expenses including rents and interest on capital actually and necessarily in use, but eliminating as far as possible all average profits in excess thereof.
7. That the costs of the delivery of all goods be charged as separate item in every instance.

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