

THE COST OF LIVING

THERE is, in reality, only one serious question which confronts all created beings, namely, What shall we eat, What shall we drink, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? We, in Canada, have, up to the present moment, been following the divine injunction, and have taken no thought for those things which are the chief concern of Gentiles who live in less favoured lands. Our food supply has apparently been automatic, like water from the tap or light from a wire in a city house. We have forgotten the laborious process of fetching water from the spring, or the slow degrees by which a candle is made and set alight.

As there is no sorrow when there is bread in the house, so there are no political problems when the private larders are full. But the first pangs of hunger arouse the primitive passions and the whole environment takes on a new colour. For nearly two hundred years the United States proceeded on its way as if it were imponderable. The two rebellions were extraneous and accidental. Any government, or no government at all, would do, since government only becomes a necessity in a community which is hungry. When the French people were tired of eating grass, the revolution broke out.

Whilst this careless situation existed, no one took any thought for the morrow. Foreign adventurers might plunder the cities, as Tweed plundered New York and the "Gas ring" plundered Philadelphia. One part of the community being protected against the other part might plunder it at will, whilst all were left free to prey upon the riches which had been accumulating upon a continent ever since it emerged from the ooze. But to-day all is changed. The United States is now in the world, and subject to world conditions. They have discovered that a nation, no more than a man, can