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"The Cost of High Living"

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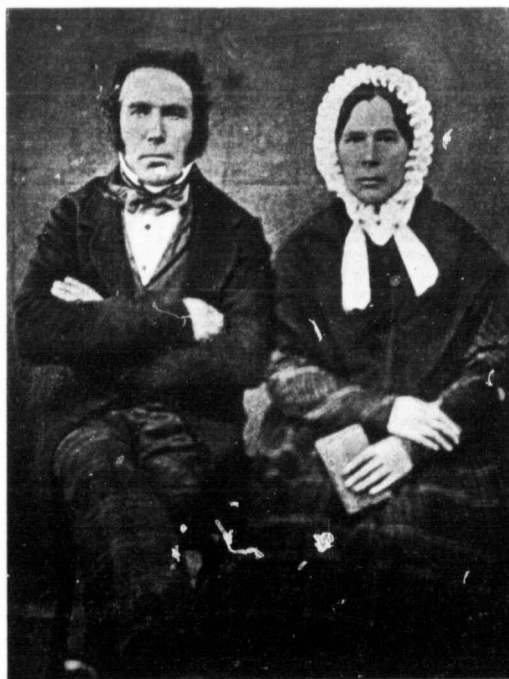


At present we hear much regarding the high cost of living. The farmer, the tradesman, the laborer, the merchant, the manufacturer, the professional man, the politician, etc., etc., all seem to gravitate around this topic until we find ourselves in the position where governments are turning it over to commissions composed of learned men to investigate for the purpose of ascertaining the true status of this germ of discontent that has crept into our civilization and to try and discover some toxic principle that will tend to counteract its ravages.

Every little while progress is appalled with the fact that her skirts have been soiled by some desecration perpetuated by that horde which we call "men and women." We think we are travelling over a smooth road that has no stones, bogs or mires when of a sudden we find ourselves jolted and jarred into a state where we see things as they are and we find what we fully intended for an unsullied page to be blotted and smeared with mistakes.

But what is this "High Cost of Living" that we hear so much about? Is it merely a scare or a political issue, or is it a real fact? Reduced to a basis of dollars and cents, it means simply that the average man of to-day is paying for the mere maintenance of life out of proportion to what he is able to earn. It means that the price of food, clothing and shelter has gone up at a higher rate than wages. It means, looked at from the eyes of the socialist, that the poor are getting poorer and that the rich are getting richer. It means that an unnatural state of affairs has crept into our industrial life that is putting things awry and that civilization is making a desperate struggle to adjust itself to the new conditions.

Forty years ago, yea twenty-



The above illustration is published for the reason that we consider it apt in a discussion of the "High Cost of Living." It represents an Ontario couple who in the early days came to the wilds of that eastern province and wrested a farm from the wilderness. The "High Cost of Living" was a thing unknown to this couple. They were sufficient unto themselves.

A glance at the illustration will show that the dress of the woman and the trousers of the man are made from the same web. Sheep were raised on the farm, the wool was carded and spun and woven by the house-wife's own hands and she in turn made up the articles of clothing.

Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Anderson of whom the above is an illustration were a sturdy old Scotch couple. They lived in their own way and their immediate surroundings were sufficient unto themselves. Sterling in character, true to principle, they with their kind paved the way for a heritage in Canada that the present generation could never have otherwise enjoyed.

Mr. and Mrs. Anderson built up a valuable farm out of practically nothing, raised a family of ten children and when the call of his country demanded, Mr. Anderson rendered valuable service in the Mackenzie Rebellion of 1837.

The simplicity and whole-heartedness of the life of these early pioneers should serve as a valuable object lesson to the average man of to-day, who is continually on the war-path against the "High Cost of Living."

five years ago, the term "High Cost of Living" was unknown and I doubt if the term can be found in anything but the most recent text books on political economy. The average man of twenty-five years ago tried to be and was to a very great extent sufficient unto himself and looked at from the standpoint of the farmer, he was almost absolutely so. He provided his food, clothing and shelter largely from the materials at hand and looked very little to the outside world to help him out. It mattered little or nothing to him whether a strike occurred in one of our great industrial plants and whether it lasted for a day, a month or a year, but it is different to-day. When a strike occurs that takes in any one of our large industrial enterprises, (and when it takes in one it takes in practically all of them, so unionized is our system of labor) the farmer feels it.

We will say that a strike occurs in a steel mill. The next time the farmer goes to town to buy a spool of barb wire, he is informed that the price has gone up 10 per cent. and upon asking the reason he is told that a strike has occurred in the steel mills which has advanced the price of wire. He goes to town to buy a suit of clothes and upon finding that he has to pay \$1.00 more for the same suit than what he paid when he bought his last one, he of course asks the reason why, and is informed that the weavers have been on a strike and that the cost of production has increased accordingly.

The laborer in the town feels it more than does the farmer. Someone gets it into his head that he wants to play the "bull and bear" game a little bit strong and the first thing we know there is a beautiful corner in the price of wheat. The first thing the laborer knows he is paying 6c. a

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