

THE FOOD QUESTION.

The recent visit to Ottawa of Lord Northcliffe, head of the British War Mission to the United States and Canada was for the purpose of discussing with Mr. Hanna vitally important matters in connection with food conservation and control. The prices paid by the Allies' buyers on this continent up to the present have been offered without consultation with, or reference to, the food control organizations of either Canada or the United States. The need of having these methods changed has been recognized and Lord Northcliffe is working with Mr. Hanna in an effort to bring about complete co-operation between the Allies' buying organization in North America and the food controllers of Canada and the United States. As a result of the conferences much good is expected.

Following consultations with Mr. Hanna in Ottawa, Lord Northcliffe addressed a luncheon meeting of the Canadian Club in Montreal. His address, in so far as it related to food control, follows:

"My coming here on this occasion was for the very practical purpose of discussing the food situation with your Food Controller. I have had the pleasure of knowing and meeting the three food controllers, Mr. Hoover, Lord Rhondda and Mr. Hanna, and they strike me as being men of the same type exactly; men absolutely fearless of criticism, men who had the courage to take up what is perhaps the most unpopular task in any democracy, that is, of decreasing the size of every man's meal. I say that a food controller should have the courage of a lion, the eye of a hawk and the hide of a buffalo.

"I hope I shall not be accused of preaching to my fellow subjects when I say that I have not seen very much sign of food control in Canada as compared with the restrictions that have been placed upon our food in Great Britain. The food situation for the world as described to me by the three great experts of food, men like Mr. Hoover who have studied the subject for years, is that owing to the shortage of labour caused by the war, caused by the number of men in the army and in the munitions factory, labour has been taken away from the farm which has produced varying harvests with the result that there is a world shortage of food. It is very difficult to believe that in any great city. In all the cities at war that I have visited there is apparently plenty of food in the stores, the

hotels and restaurants. None the less if you watch the increased price of food in all these countries, even in countries so strictly controlled as ours, where profiteering is now almost impossible, you cannot blind your eyes to the fact that there is some real reason for the rise of food, the real reason being very largely the fact that the food of the public has to be limited. . . .

"There are one or two things on the subject of food control that I must say. We in Great Britain, like you in Canada, have the reputation that when we make a law we keep it. It has taken us a long time to devise proper methods of food control and I do not suppose that even at the end of ten years the scheme will be perfect. It varies with the circumstances and time and needs of the war. But Lord Rhondda's scheme is a large scheme and though it is very unpopular, like all food control, it is working well. . . .

"The real reason why we are taking all these precautions in Great Britain is not to protect the civil population at all, but to see that the Allied armies at the front get their full rations. There are many in this room, I know, who know what the word 'front' means. They have been to the war, and I can imagine no greater selfishness on the part of a democracy than to eat its full while it is allowing its soldiers, in that dreary land in which they have been for three years, to go short. The very work of a soldier demands that he should be the best fed man in the world.

"And not only have we to protect the food of the soldier. I have not the figures before me, but you are all aware that since the beginning of the war the ships of the British Navy and those attached to it have increased tenfold. Sometimes we only think of the navy in terms of battleships, destroyers and submarines. Added to these are thousands of small craft, trawlers, drifters, observation ships and on every one of these, summer and winter—and do not forget we have a very severe winter in the North Sea and North Atlantic—are men who must have their daily full ration to carry out their work.

"Quite apart from our Navy, which has prevented any German ship from appearing on the ocean for the last eighteen months, are the men in the air. Can you conceive a man going through that hellish life, 18,000 feet up, clothed in electrically-