

from day to day how she is advancing in that particular; and some of the most interesting articles in English books and English magazines are upon the fact that whilst their chemists and people discovered ways and means greatly to the profit of humanity, they had neither the brains nor the energy to develop them. They were picked up by Germany, and other countries, and made use of; and England, instead of benefiting, suffered in the long run. Great Britain has given that up. She has turned her attention to the use of those things that have been invented and discovered for her advantage. It is unnecessary to point to the United States in that particular. From one end of that country to the other they are throbbing with intelligence; they are throbbing with energy; they are seeking for every known means of bettering what we may call at large the physical condition of the world and their own people.

It behoves us to advance in that way; and I say that you will look in vain on the Order Paper for many years to find much which bears on questions which we are now about to consider. There are people who will say that the high cost of living should be left to take care of itself. Well, we find that such a state of affairs is absolutely impossible, unless we say at the same time that anarchy may run riot in the country. There must be a balance, an equilibrium in the country or you cannot have contentment, you cannot have satisfaction, you cannot have reasonable comfort, you cannot have progress. You will have what you are on the verge of having in this country, an upheaval; and I say that if we have discord, that if we have discontent, if we have disturbances in the country, it is largely the fault of this Parliament in that it has given no great intelligent consideration to the questions which stare it directly in the face.

We are supposed to control transportation; we are supposed to control all the adjuncts of transportation; we suppose ourselves to have reached that advanced stage in which we enable one part of the country to trade with another, working men to reach their work, and labour to secure work. They say there is plenty of labour in the country, plenty of work. Well then surely it must be the fault of the people who are administering the affairs of the country if labour cannot get to work and work is out of reach of labour. This happens in a great many cases because, of course, as we are all aware, it is a matter of serious expense on the part of labour to get to its work. Therefore it is for us to

take an intelligent consideration of these matters and to remember above all not to bring forward weekly budgets from a Ministry of Labour that absolutely fail to tally with the week's earnings of the wage earner. It is a matter of the simplest possible logic that when the weekly budget amounts to a sum—mind you of necessities, and really not all the necessaries but as a matter of fact less than two-thirds of the necessaries—in excess, and considerably in excess, of the weekly earnings of the average wage earner there can be no escape from discontent, anger and disturbance. People are very much inclined, especially those who have reached a certain stage of comfort and luxury, to wave off all these troubles as if they were necessary troubles arising from the struggle for existence, and to take the view, as the free-trader says, that they will settle themselves. Of course they will settle themselves. If a man is in trouble and if he becomes desperate he will settle the question by going out and snatching what he wants from somebody else. The questions will settle themselves, the problems will find solution, but such a solution as no civilized society could endorse or endure. Now when we have reached the very apex of the situation, when the high cost of living is so high that it is beyond all bounds, when it has nothing whatever to do, as at present, with the old time-worn doctrine of supply and demand,—when there may be a great supply and corresponding great demand, or a greater supply and a less demand, or vice versa,—it makes no difference, the cost of living mounts, the struggle for existence becomes more frightful, until at last every man who considers the question at all must ask himself: What will be the result?

The labouring men of this country will in the end solve the question for themselves if we do not solve it. There is a certain class of people not up to what we call the standard mechanic or the regular wage-earner, people who depend upon the precarious supply of unskilled labour—for example, the ordinary digger. If the winter is hard he has little to do, and the harder the winter the less he has to do, but the more it costs him to live. In a country sensibly managed such people should have every means afforded them of earning their livelihood and enjoying reasonable comfort, and not be condemned to a miserable existence because we are too lazy or too selfish or unchristianized and have not brains enough for the proper conduct of the ordinary affairs of life.