

spect. "Your Canadian farmers," he said, "are as a class comfortable and prosperous. If they are to receive higher prices for their grain under the preference system — and that is what they are led to expect — the increase must be paid for by the working classes of the United Kingdom, very many of whom have a hard struggle to live even when food is un-taxed. Would the Canadians wish to thus profit at the expense of their poorer British brethren?" It was a difficult question to answer before. Perhaps under new conditions the British workman may be better off, and be more willing to bear the food tax. He will not be in a hurry to adopt the new policy, even though it is recommended by such an influential committee.

### Stupid as Well as Criminal.

IN many things it would be folly to allege that the Germans are lacking in intelligence. They are remarkably well informed in some things. They are wonderfully efficient in certain directions. They have had an Intelligence Department, with representatives scattered over the world, maintained at a heavy expense, to keep the German Government fully advised of what has been going on. We may be sure that a vast mass of information of a statistical character has been accumulated, setting forth certain conditions in each country. Any question respecting the trade, commerce or industry of any country can be quickly answered by the Berlin officials from the contents of the numberless pigeon holes in the several departments. But all their Bernstorffs and Boppas have failed to understand the spirit, the soul, of the British people, or of the people of this North American continent. They failed entirely to understand the spirit of Canada. They have lately shown that they have never understood the spirit of the American people. They are now proving their utter stupidity in their approaches to Mexico and Japan.

This is the only explanation that can be offered for the extraordinary plot of Herr Zimmerman, the German Foreign Secretary, to bring Mexico and Japan into the alliance of the Central Powers and use them against the United States. The idea that a Mexican Government that has never been able to rule its own people and is obliged to engage in a constant fight with bandits to keep up a semblance of power—the idea that such a government could be made a useful and effective ally, would hardly enter into the mind of anybody but a German Minister of State. Madder still was the notion that the alleged government of Carranza could be made the instrument of inducing Japan to abandon her relations with Britain and her Allies and unite with the Central Powers in a war against the United States.

That the Germans should engage in this conspiracy against the United States at a moment when they were declaring their friendly regard for that country need not cause surprise. Nobody now expects anything like honor from the Germans in their negotiations with other nations. But the folly, the stupidity of the German plan respecting Mexico and Japan, is the thing that must cause surprise in many quarters.

### The Blessing of High Cost.

IN New York, in Chicago, and in several other cities of the United States there have been riots due to the high cost of food. The women especially, to whom the cost of food comes closely home, have been the leaders in complaining. City, State and National authorities are being appealed to for means

of relief. Numerous commissions are being appointed to ascertain the cause of the evil, for an evil it is assumed to be. The authorities might engage the services of Mr. George L. Walker, who writes weekly in the Boston Commercial, and send him into the districts in which the disturbances have occurred, to explain matters to the people. If he can be as successful in convincing the people as he seems to have been in convincing himself, he should be able to calm the agitation and turn the weeping of the women into shouts of joy. Mr. Walker has satisfied himself that this high cost of living, of which so many misguided people are complaining, is a blessing for which everybody should be grateful. Hear him:

"The American people needed this 'high cost of living' experience to stimulate agriculture, and it is to their good fortune that it came at a time when there was employment at more than living wages for everybody. Food production for a long time had not been keeping pace with the growth of population. High cost of living had arrived and established itself long before the war broke out, and those having good memories will recall distinctly that it continued to hold the centre of the stage during the several months of hard times and general unemployment that immediately preceded the explosion in Europe. The country was on its way to a food shortage and the war simply hurried it along. If the former hadn't overtaken the latter until some year of general industrial depression the lesson would have had to be learned under most distressing conditions.

"These excessively high prices for foods will make farming attractive as a business. They will cause thousands of men to leave the cities and add hundreds of thousands of acres to the millions now under cultivation. Just such a situation as this was necessary, because all other lines of enterprise had become more profitable than farming, proportionate to the amount of energy, application and judgment required. Now the country will begin producing a generation of rich farmers."

In the presence of this happy explanation it seems a pity that so many people should still be under the impression that they are hungry. Mr. Walker should go giving a commission to travel in the food shortage regions and explain to the people how fortunate they are.

### The Sale of Honors.

IT IS not a pleasant title for an article. It is, however, not our own. It is reproduced from one of the most prominent Conservative journals in England, the editor of which has been moved by some recent announcements of honors to give the public some information as to the manner in which such things are managed. There is, of course, a surface view of the matter which the public is expected to take. Somebody whose services and virtues, perhaps, had not previously been known to a cold world, receives rank and title, whereupon an admiring press announces that His Majesty the King has been pleased to confer such honors on Mr. So-and-So, in recognition of his great merits. Citizens in the quiet walks of life who read these announcements picture His Majesty lying awake at midnight, wondering how he can adequately reward the very remarkable services which the individual in question has performed for the Empire. This conception of how the thing is done, however, does not appear to have a place in the minds of those who are nearer to the throne. The Morning Post, the organ of old-fashioned conservatism,

takes its readers into the inner chambers of politics and tells us how, in many cases, honors are produced. The London journal says:

"We have heard that Venice, in her palmy days, had a golden book in which the names of those who had done signal service to the Republic were recorded. It was an idea both beautiful and magnanimous, and at first was a great success. But the entries grew with astonishing rapidity, and the reasons for them became correspondingly vague and grandiloquent, while at the same time certain officials or parties in the State of Venice grew unaccountably rich, and the State herself declined. We do not suggest that this was anything more than a coincidence; but it is at least certain that the inevitable happened, and in the last ten years of the Republic not a single entry honored or sullied its pages.

"There is a real danger that this fate may also overtake the honors now granted—or supposed by a constitutional fiction to be granted—by His Majesty the King. The British people are slower witted than the Venetians, but they are beginning to discern that those ancient and noble titles which were held in so much esteem by our ancestors are now being given, or rather sold, not to merit but to opulence, and not for public service but for political support. It is worth knowing that those who may fairly be said to be 'in the know' have refused these honors, as, for example, Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Balfour, and Mr. Asquith. All these gentlemen, having been Prime Ministers themselves, had the best means of knowing to what depths of degradation the system had reached, and it may be presumed that this knowledge restrained them from accepting honors for themselves, just as no one will eat macaroni who has seen it being made. We are credibly informed that there exists, or existed, a regular tariff—so much for a Knighthood, so much for a Baronetcy, and so much for a Peerage. Not only so, but the scale varied according to the supply and demand. . . . This is a time, as we have already said, when the nation is stirred to its depths. It is looking with a questioning and lowering eye into those institutions by which it feels itself betrayed. And it will not much longer tolerate those rank abuses which were protected by custom and familiarity in the comfortable times of peace."

These plain-spoken comments, from such a high and responsible quarter of British journalism, have attracted much attention in the Mother Country. Mr. Thomas Gibson Bowles, a well known Conservative, long a Member of Parliament, has addressed a letter to the editor of The Morning Post, which is published under the heading: "The Sale of Honors." Mr. Bowles says:

"You do a great public service, which I hope you will continue, in calling attention to that sale of honors which has lately been a foul reproach to our party system. Of the existence of this loathsome system there can be no doubt since the debates in the House of Lords, and the frank avowals then made, but how deeply the canker has entered into our political life is not known to the public at large, nor will it be until a most searching inquiry into it is made by an authoritative body—such as a Royal Commission—having full powers to examine the Party Whips and the banking accounts and other documents of the party funds."