

In certain countries, Mr. Speaker, efforts were made to crush this new-born power, with the result that the masses revolted and that all barriers were overthrown. All kinds of unsound doctrines were instilled in the minds of the people by unscrupulous agitators, with the result that the advent of the working class was that of anarchy and disorganization.

It is not to be feared that the new countries of America, should we remain in different, may suffer in the same way? Is it not to be feared, that, through our carelessness, the labouring classes, whether they belong to industry or to agriculture, may become the prey of dangerous agitators? It is with a view to avoiding such misfortune, that I would like the Government of this country to become particularly interested in the condition of the working classes. Owing to certain influences well known to us all and which the Government did not try to do away with, the cost of staple goods in Canada has increased beyond proportion. True it is that the salaries of the workingmen have increased also, but this increase is far from representing a due compensation for the voluntary or arbitrary increase in the cost of living. Previous to the war, \$7 was enough to keep a family during a week. In January, 1919, the same family of five was obliged to spend, for the same length of time, the sum of \$14.87, which meant an increase of one hundred per cent. Surely, people working on munitions earned very high salaries, but the manufacturing of munitions has stopped and there is, so far, no indication of a decrease in the cost of life in the near future. The situation is yet a serious one, nay, is getting to be more and more disquieting, for a great many people are looking for work, and in some cases, there is a tendency to a decrease in salaries. Therefore, the Government must look into that problem with no delay and not so much with a view to securing higher salaries for the workingmen as to making sure that a decrease in the cost of life will be brought about. The buying power of a dollar, to-day, is reduced to such an extent, that nobody will even think of saving under circumstances where this could be done heretofore. It is absolutely necessary that conditions should change before it is too late.

The hon. gentlemen who moved the Address said: "To-day, the cloud has lifted and we stand on the threshold of an assured and, I believe, a lasting era of peace. Our great epoch of struggle and sacrifice is ended." Those words are true in so far

[Mr. Pelletier.]

as they concern external peace, but one has not the same certainty of internal peace when one hears the ominous rumblings, here and in other countries of the world.

My hon. friend says further: "The people of Canada may, now that the tremendous burden of effort and sacrifice, imposed on them by the war, has been removed, pause to review with pride the excellent record which they have made under the leadership of the Prime Minister and his cabinet."

Beyond doubt the people of Canada may look with pride to the great things that have been accomplished. I am sure they have already done so, but they will not pause for all that. Those who have amassed millions of dollars during the war, those who have doubled and tripled their already large holdings, can pause and look back on what has been done, but the workingman, the father of a large family who has to wait for the weekly or monthly pay to buy bread and shoes for his children has no time to pause.

If the Prime Minister and his cabinet are really anxious to give the people time to pause and review in their mind the glorious pages that have been added to the history of our country, the economic condition must be changed; there must be an end to those groping and tentative methods and the country should be given constructive legislation.

By all means let the Government do something to bring down the high cost of living. If nothing is done in that direction, the peace that will be signed shortly in Paris will mean nothing for Canada, for war between classes will have started and no one can predict where it will stop.

What is going on in other countries does not justify us in being optimists. What is happening in the great cities; the bolshevistic and socialistic disturbances that we hear of, when the censor abstains interfering with the newspapers, does not convey any great hope for the future.

How can the Government lower the cost of living? First by not allowing the unscrupulous middleman to carry on his speculations in regard to all the necessities of life.

Three years ago, the Canadian people should have been protected against those vampires. The only means to that end is to impose a very heavy tax on all profits over a reasonable percentage. Those who are convicted of extravagance and hoarding should be severely dealt with. A maximum price should be put on every necessary