

THE COST OF LIVING.

To the Editor.

Sir—I, with a great many poor unfortunate housewives and mothers, protest against the outrageous cost of living. I weigh everything and never find full weight. Why are not the shop scales seen to? We are robbed in weights and measures. We are told there is no duty on kerosine, but why are we charged 3/9 a tin? Matches are 3½d. a packet. Kerosine used to be 2/9 a few years ago. We are asked to support local industries, with flour at 3½d. a packet, oats 1/4 a small bag, and never a full pound in the butter, and never 2 lb. in the bread at 3½d. a loaf. I have five children, and we are nearly starving. We try hard to make ends meet and pay our way, but the enormous cost of provisions is really heartrending. We have inspectors with big salaries, which we poor housewives have to pay heavy taxes for. I sent for 1 lb. washing soda just now, and it weighed ¾ lb., and a loaf bread 1½ lb. It is a disgrace to civilisation.—I am, &c.,

ALMORA.

April 14, 1909.

Sir — The timely letter by "Minister of Religion" must commend itself to thousands of your readers. It is only a few years back when our farmers were crying out for assistance from the State, and received it; now we find the position reversed. One has only to pay a visit to the farmers to realise what their sentiments are regarding reciprocating in times of high prices like the present. One would naturally think now that we have so much Labor representation in Parliament, the workers would be in at least as good a position as when we had no direct representation; but strange to say, as regard the prices of the necessaries of life, we are in a worse position. The whole trouble can be traced to the introduction of the Produce Export Department. Agents and printed matter are freely circulated through the State to induce the producers to send the whole of their produce to the depot for export. High prices are assured and bonuses freely given. If the Labor Party think they are serving their constituents best by assisting the Liberals, who are mainly interested in bolstering up the Export Department, and thereby assisting to keep up the prices of butter, eggs, &c., they will soon find the electors in the city and suburban electorates will take a hand in settling the matter. Now is Labor's opportunity to legislate in the best interests of those who require assistance, the farmers are well catered for by Conservatives and Liberals.—I am, &c.,

LABOR.