

COST OF LIVING.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD.

Sir,—For some time past the prices of commodities of all sorts, but more especially the actual necessities of life, have been gradually rising in price, so that those with the statutory wage, who seldom or never rise above the existing stage in life, must feel the pinch of poverty to make ends meet. To the worried wife with little children to feed and clothe this is a terrible tax on her resources. I can safely say, Sir, in our small home, with the best of skilled management on £2 a week, after paying 11s rent, and paying spot cash for all necessaries of life (for we only can afford these), there is nothing left worth speaking of to buy clothing, boots, etc., at present prices. Tobacco and beer I have not tasted for some months. I have actually learnt to do without them now. The tyranny of these prices, passed on to the consumer all the time, demonstrates the helplessness of the suffering people. My wife is worried to death with pinching poverty till it makes her weary and sick of life. But what can be done under the circumstances?

What New South Wales wants is a saviour, and that now without a minute's delay, for we are mere creatures of political vampires, who sit in judgment on us at Melbourne, and decree how much we shall pay them in the form of an unjust tax, which is affecting our very existence, and depriving not only the very poor but the middle class of every comfort in life. We are in the grip of an octopus. There can be no denying that to anyone with his eyes wide open. Before the days of federation were ushered in, it would be hard to find a cheaper or more contented place than Sydney, for there was always enough and to spare in the purchasing power of a pound, where it takes almost two now to equal it. Not long ago a hungry man could buy two loaves for 3d at any shop where bread was retailed; meat could be had for 1d lb; butter 6d and 8d lb; milk 3d quart; rice 12lb for 10d. In the bad times our family lived on this grain.

To-day I know of men's wives, employed in the G.P.O. at £2, who have to go out charring and mending in order to buy clothes for the women and children. There are others, too—men of 40 and over—employed in the Commonwealth, receiving the same amount. The wife has to go out to help earn something for the family needs, for their wages of £110 are not sufficient to provide food, rent, and clothing, not to mention the sundry needs of a household.

I am, etc.,

Oct. 21.

G. P. H.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD.

Sir,—Your interesting article on the wheat crop in this morning's issue shows that with the best we can expect the crop is going to be far short of local requirements.

Surely the Government will consider the conditions, and not pass the proposed tariff regarding foodstuffs, especially on those that affect not only the rich man but the poor.

The isolated position of Australia, with the heavy charges for freight by land and sea, and, added to this, wharfage and cartage charges on cereal foods, are at least equal to a protection of from 15 to 20 per cent. This should be sufficient at any time; but in the face of a drought, which means less work for the labouring classes and less profit for the rich, with increased expenses of living, surely common sense and consideration for the people will cause the Government to at least reduce the tariff on foods that are a necessity for our morning meal.

Bread has already advanced, and I have it on the best authority that if the proposed legislation is passed our breakfast foods will at once be increased in price.

England refuses to have her breakfast table interfered with. Why should we increase our cost of living when our isolated position is already a tax on us in the way of expensive freights by rail and sea.

I am, etc.,

TED STOREY.