

be sufficient to make possible the rearing of families in order to provide successive generations of laborers, though in highly developed centres of population this average is considerably reduced by the employment of the whole family who are thus individually enabled to work for less wages as their collective wage is on the average sufficient to meet the necessities of the family.

So much for the minimum wage. The maximum limit of wages is the most the employer can pay and still have a profit, for clearly if the wage rose so high as to eliminate his profit there would be no alternative for him but to shut down his works.

Between this maximum and minimum, wages fluctuate. In newly developed localities where laborers are scarce, wages incline towards the maximum. In older centres, where the supply of laborers is in excess of the demand, wages fall to the minimum, and in extreme cases, below it, so much so that they are insufficient to keep the workers alive in season and out of season without recourse to "charity."

Out of these conditions the labor unions arise, as associations of workers seeking by combination to raise their wages. Their success or failure in this attempt is determined by the difficulty or ease with which their places can be filled if they strike.

In the earlier stages of the wage system of pro-