

## What Makes Wages

Trade unionism is the only effective means to raise the wages of any particular trade and to aid an under-paid trade in gaining a fair day's wages for a fair day's work. High wages are the indispensable prerequisite of a liberal standard of living of the masses, affording an efficient demand for commodities, so that capital can be employed to supply the desired commodities and services.

Capitalists cannot create the conditions of the successful employment of their accumulations, as we know that millions of dollars worth of various forms of capital wait for opportunities to be profitably employed. The investment of capital in further production depends upon the extension of the habitual needs of the masses, which work for a liberal standard of living.

Combinations and trusts have on the whole raised prices and reduced wages, decreased the output, diminished employment and otherwise manipulated the market. The question is, how to reconcile the interests and the self-seeking of the individual with the interests and the common welfare of society. The individual follows in the pursuit of gain merely his own advantage, while the community represents a moral order, intended to enable its individual members with their rival aims and businesses to co-exist in peace. The practical problem therefore is always one of the intervention of a moral judgment and will, superior to the individual, and acting as a corrective in the sphere of private enterprise. Hence we invariably find in economic history on the one side the impulsive business energy of the individual, and on the other a higher, governing element, which operates to restrain but also to educate the individual, and which may be termed the associative element of economic life. In this way a reciprocal working is established between individual enterprise and social order.

As regards the preponderance of the social element in relation to the individual, or the reverse, the history of society shows a series of remarkable vicissitudes. The mediæval church, while fully alive to the importance of individualism, nevertheless established through her ordinances and her authority in general, a compact system of society, so elaborate and firmly settled, that this idea, even at the present day still exercises a powerful attraction, although the conditions that underlay it have long since disappeared. It was the ecclesiasticism of the middle ages that gave birth to the Guild, in which the powers of the individual were strictly limited, and confined by social and religious ordinances.

Later on, when this social system had lost its essentially ecclesiastical basis, the state instead undertook to regulate trade and commerce, industries and manufactures, by means of guiding or restricting precepts of every kind, until the gathering strength of individualism succeeded in first loosening and then bursting the old barriers. This individualism acquired ultimately in the course of the eighteenth century so powerful a position throughout the whole western world as to outweigh entirely the element of association, and assert a power which led to a reaction. Since then the restoration of the associative element to its proper rights has formed the social problem for the nations. The reason why the workingman's question has been seriously grappled with in England is not because the workingman has appealed to the State, but because the English nation has made this question their own. The social idea now prevailing if we may so designate the problem, how to reconcile the intellectual and moral progress of the working classes with the new methods of production based on

machinery and large industries, has made its appearance in the various States of Europe in very different manners. In those countries where that idea has continued to represent the interest of one class alone, it has no doubt gained adherents, roused opponents and influenced politics and legislation; but it has never succeeded in becoming, so to speak, a new life-blood for the age, permeating all the arteries of the nation, and shaping all its thoughts and energies anew. It has never been more than partially understood and has had only a partial influence on human action. It has become a great power, but a power which has stepped uninvited into the conflicts of the day and embittered instead of allaying them.

The free expression of opinion in literature and the press has made the English nation familiar with the necessity of a social reform in all directions. It appears hopeless to think of solving what is called the social problem until a nation as a whole has learnt to think socially on the subject. Socialism means co-operation and a community of interests, sympathy, the giving to the hands not so large a share as to the brains, but a larger share than hitherto in the wealth they must combine to produce, and has in itself the secret of an orderly and benign reconstruction. The individual who follows his own interest, without regard to the family or the state is always a social danger; and a self-seeking which is absolutely unlimited by a regard for these institutions cannot be the basis of a permanent civilization; only in a well established and highly-organized society can such individualism be suffered to exist at all.

A new social element has been brought into play—namely, the requirements of a higher state of life and culture, exercising a strong influence on the question of wages. A fair day's wages are consequent and conditional upon the fair day's work. Thus the demand assumes the dignity of a moral claim and this moral standpoint constitutes the strength of the working classes in the struggle for higher wages.—Joseph Gruenhut.

### EQUALITY BEFORE THE LAW.

"Equality before the law" must include all citizens. If the bankers are given special privileges by law, the law should be repealed; to give mine-owners special privileges as well as bankers makes the case worse instead of better. If manufacturers or their workmen get an advantage from tariff laws, the laws should be abolished; to invent tariff schedules to benefit the farmers as much as the manufacturers or workmen, is to make the case worse instead of better. There are many citizens in this country besides bankers, and there are many who are neither mine-owners, manufacturers, factory workers or farmers.

The tariff system naturally bears unequally upon our citizens, assisting some and damaging others. In its revenue phase it was invented as a device for plucking live geese without occasioning a quacking protest; in its "protective" phase it was invented to give certain citizens several feathers to every one received by the government, regardless of the fact that the geese are by it too thoroughly plucked.

The farmer, of all men, should be willing to go back to first principles, and to deduce from a consideration of them correct policies. There is no necessity for protective tariffs, and none for revenue tariffs. The government can be supported by direct taxes. The prosperity of the people of this country is surely not dependent upon the existence of custom houses and the activity of custom officers in brass-buttoned uniforms. Why should national lecturers think it necessary to substitute for the essence of the principle, "equality before the law," a policy

which can only be described as a grab at the chance of getting a share in the plunder distributed by vicious legislation.—George White, in New England Farmer.

### ECCENTRIC PERSONAL BOOK-KEEPING.

A most eccentric person died a few days ago in Berlin at the age of seventy-three. He began on his eighteenth birthday and kept up till his seventieth year a book which showed that during fifty-two years he had noted the smoking of 628,713 cigars, of which he had received 43,692 as presents, while for the remaining 585,021 he had paid £2,083 12s 3d., which shows that his tastes were at any rate not unduly extravagant. During the same period he had had 85 pairs of trousers made, costing altogether £92 3s 3d.; 74 coats and waistcoats for £158 3s 2d.; 62 pairs of boots for £66 2s 2d.; he wore out 298 shirts and "fronts" and 326 collars, costing altogether £57 3s 4d. In tram fares he spent £85 23s 2d. In fifteen years, according to his book keeping, he had drunk 28,786 glasses of Bavarian beer, of which, however, 21,261 were only small ones. For this beer and 36,081 glasses of cognac and other spirits he spent £1,070. He gave "tips" amounting to £261. His bookkeeping stopped when he completed his seventieth year, and at the end of this quaint volume are the words, "Omnia, tentavi, multa, persexi, nihil perfecti."—Berlin Cor. London News.

### ORIGIN OF MONOPOLISTIC POWER.

But what is the origin of this monopolistic power? Is it not in the act and deed of that very "public" that the company damns? The Carnegie Company did not deposit the coal in its beds, or fill the seams of the rocks with iron, or make the earth on which its factories stand, or spread the clay fields out of which the bricks are fashioned. Coal and iron and clay are part of the land of these United States which belongs to the people of those states; the "public," and not Carnegie. That public has hitherto allowed Mr Carnegie and his company to have certain exclusive claims over a portion of that land and has demanded no equivalent in return. It has granted privileges and failed to require corresponding duties. More than that, this despised "public" has also passed laws to enable Mr Carnegie to charge it a higher price for the product of his mills than he would be able to charge without that fostering care.—Father Huntington.

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