

## THE PROFIT IN DAY'S WAGE

From the Dearborn Independent, The Ford International Weekly.

How much profit does a workman reap from his day's labor? How much ought he to reap? Does a "good living" come under the head of profit, or is it properly a part of the cost of producing a day's labor? How far can human energies be measured and human values standardized in order that the cost of a day's labor may be standardized?

Questions like these occur in one period or another of every man's thought about a system of economics which shall be more solidly based than any which serves us now.

But a more than academic interest attaches to these questions, for they are the real, even if unspoken, basis for much of the irritation and confusion which exists in the industrial world today.

The workingman is beginning to understand that he is in business. His raw material is human energy. His product is a day's work. All other business men seek a profit above cost of production, why should not he?

The difficulty thus far has been in making out the cost sheet. How much does it cost to produce a day's work?—that is the question for which there seems to be no satisfactory basic answer.

It is perhaps accurately to determine—albeit with considerable interference with the day's work itself—how much energy the day's work takes out of a man. But it is not at all possible to accurately determine how much it will require to put back that energy into him against the next day's demands. Nor is it possible to determine how much of that expended energy you will never be able to put back at all—because a "sinking fund" for the replacement of the body and vital strength of a worker has never been invented.

It is possible, however, to consider these latter problems in a lump and provide for them under a form of old-age pensions; but even so, we have not thus attended to the question of profit which each day's labor ought to yield in order to take care of all of life's overhead, all physical losses, and the inevitable deterioration which falls upon all earthly things.

Moreover, there are questions having to do with the pre-productive period, which would have to be solved. Here is the man, let us say, ready to begin his service to society by turning out days' work throughout his life. How much did it cost to rear and educate him to his present age and usefulness? And how can that be figured as part of the cost of the energy he puts forth as he works today? Now, if it were the case of a machine, you would know what to charge. The machine cost a certain sum; it wears out at a given rate; it would cost such-and-such an amount to replace. It is a simple matter to figure the actual cost of the machine and its productive work, and add the profit.

Can we do that with men? Rather, can men do that for themselves, so that selling a day's work they will have as intelligent an idea of the cost of that day's work and the profit it ought to bring, as any manufacturer ought to have of his product?

The problem becomes more complicated when you consider the man in all his aspects. For he is more than a workman who spends a certain number of hours at his work in the shop every day.

If he were only himself, the cost of his maintenance and the profit he ought to have would be a simple matter. But he is more than himself. He is a citizen, contributing by his cultivation and

interest to the welfare of the city. He is probably a householder, living under conditions which represent more than mere maintenance, in that they represent the graces of social life. More than that, he is probably a father with a more or less numerous progeny, all of whom must subsist and be reared to usefulness on what he is able to earn.

Now, it is obvious that to regard the man alone, refusing to reckon with the home and the family in the background, is to arrive at a series of facts which are misleading and which alone can never suffice even for a temporary solution of the questions that concern us.

How are you going to figure the contribution of the home to the day's work of the man? You are paying the man for his work, but how much does that work owe to his home? How much to his position as a citizen? How much to his position as the provider of a family? The man does the work in the shop, but his wife does the work of the home, and the shop must pay them both: on what system of figuring is the home going to find its place on the cost sheets of the day's work? It finds its place there already in a sort of haphazard way. If a man cannot support himself, his wife, his children, his habitation, his position in society—why, he doesn't stay at the job, that's all. It isn't a matter of cost and profit to him; it is the matter of a "living."

Is a man's own livelihood the "cost"? And is his ability to have a home and a family the "profit"? Is the profit on a day's work to be computed on a cash basis only, measured by the amount a man has left over after his own and family's wants are all supplied?

Is the livelihood of five or six persons besides those of the actual worker to be charged up to "profit"? Or, are all these relationships to be considered strictly under head of "cost," and the profit to be computed entirely outside of them? That is, after having supported himself and family, clothed them, housed them, educated them, given them the privileges incident to their standard of living ought there to be provision made for still something more in the way of savings profit, and all properly chargeable to the day's work? These are questions which call for accurate observation and computation.

Perhaps there is no one item connected with our economic life that would surmise us more than a knowledge of just what excess burdens the day's work actually carries. It carries all the worker's obligations outside the shop; it carries all that is necessary in the way of service and management inside the shop. The day's productive work is the most valuable mine of wealth that has ever been opened.

Certainly it cannot be made to carry less than all the worker's outside obligations. And certainly it ought to be made to take care of the worker's sunset days when labor is no longer possible to him, and should be no longer necessary. And, if it is made to do even these, industry will have to be adjusted to a schedule of production, distribution and reward which will stop the leaks toward the pockets of men who do not assist production in any way, and turn all streams for the benefit of those who do. In order to create a system which shall be as independent of the good-will of benevolent employers as of the ill-will of selfish ones, we shall have to find a basis in the actual facts of life itself.

It costs just as much physical strength to turn out a day's work when wheat is \$1 a bushel, as when wheat is \$2.50 a bushel. Eggs may be 12 cents a dozen or 90 cents a dozen—it makes no difference in the units of energy a man uses in a productive day's work. One would think that the real basis of value would be the cost of transmitting human energy into articles of trade and commerce. But no; that most honest of all human activities is made subject to the speculative shrewdness of men who can produce false shortages of food and other commodities, and thus excite anxiety of demand in society. It is not in industry that the trouble lies, but in those regions beyond, where men lie in wait to seize the fruits of industry and create false scarcities for the sake of arousing an anxious demand for things which, normally, are and ought to be accessible to all who engage in daily productive pursuits. We must begin with the land; we must continue with the day's labor; and we must keep so close, so jealously close to both these fundamentals that we shall be suspicious and fearful of all that robs the land of men, and robs labor of its primal importance in material life. We shall think out, and try out, and establish more enduring economic systems as we go on about our work, than we shall ever be able to do sitting idle with our heads in our hands trying to "think" a new world system out of our brains. The day's work is the hub around which the whole wheel of earth-life swings. It must be kept central, both in our thinking and our action. Any system that shunts the day's work off to one side as unimportant, is riding to a fall.

### FIRST ESSENTIAL FOR CO-OPERATION.

The division of research in agricultural economics at University Farm, after having made a protracted study of co-operation by farmers, finds that Minnesota leads all the states in the number of co-operative companies. It finds, too, that Minnesota's lead is not likely to be challenged for many years to come. Sound economic need is cited by the investigators as the basis for a successful co-operative company. "Such a need exists," they declare, "where the present markets give poor service or take too large profits; where the present marketing system is wasteful and expensive, and whenever the farmers by combining can reach better markets with their products or teach themselves to turn out better products."

### RED DURUM HELD NOT PROFITABLE.

A. C. Arny, associate professor of farm crops at University farm, says that Red Durum wheat, known as "D5", put out originally by the North Dakota state, but recalled by it on account of lack of milling quality, should not be grown by Minnesota farmers.

"It is a low yielder as compared with good durum varieties," says Mr. Arny, "and is low in milling value. Furthermore, Red Durum wheat of any kind brings 10 to 15 cents a bushel less than the Yellow Durum on the terminal markets and there is a reason for it. Therefore, avoid growing Red Durum wheat of any kind. If in doubt send in a sample for identification."

"The best durum variety for Minnesota at present is Mindum, Minnesota No. 470," continues Mr. Arny. "This is a yellow wheat, fairly rust resistant and a high yielder. Some seed of this variety is available for distribution at University Farm and a greater amount at the Crookston station."

## THERE'S A SONG IN THE AIR

There's a song in the air!  
There's a star in the sky!  
There's a mother's deep prayer,  
And a baby's low cry!  
And the star rains its fire  
While the beautiful sing,  
For the manger of Bethlehem  
Cradles a king!

There's a tumult of joy  
O'er the wonderful birth,  
For the Virgin's sweet boy  
Is the Lord of the earth.  
Aye! the star rains its fire  
While the beautiful sing,  
For the manger of Bethlehem  
Cradles a king!

In the light of that star  
Lie the ages imperiled,  
And that song from afar  
Has swept o'er the world.  
Every hearth is aflame,  
And the beautiful sing  
In the homes of the nations  
That Jesus is King!

We rejoice in the light,  
And we echo the song  
That comes down through the night  
From the heavenly throng.  
Aye! we shout to the lovely  
Evangel they bring.  
And we greet in his cradle  
Our Savior and King.  
—Josiah G. Holland.

## LORE OF THE YULE LOG

Should Be Lighted From Portion of Last Year's Which Should Be Preserved for Good Luck.

The Yule-log, a probable variant of the bonfire—so characteristic of sun festivals—has some interesting folklore of its own.

In medieval England, its duration coincided with the Christmas revels. As long as it burned, the tenant had a right to feed at the lord's expense. The log was often cut from an ash-tree—the sacred tree of our Saxon forefathers. There is a gypsy legend that our Lord was born in a field and brought up by an ash-fire.

The log should, properly, be lighted with a portion of last year's log, a piece of which is always supposed to be preserved for luck. At the same time that the Christmas fire was lit, the Christmas candle had to be lighted. (A portion of last year's taper has also to be kept.) It was unlucky to snuff the Christmas candle, which burned for 12 days—the period of festivity. At St. John's college, Oxford, can still be seen the ancient stone socket with the Agnus Dei stamp, in which the Christmas candle was placed on the high table.

On the Isle of Man, the folk formerly carried long tapers to church on Christmas eve.

## The Season's Greetings

At this season of the year our thoughts turn toward those whose friendly relations have made possible bigger and better things, so we sincerely extend to you and yours a hearty holiday greeting. May the New Year bring you its full measure of blessings together with all the good things the old year failed to furnish.

## The Robertson Lumber Co.

O. L. HOLT, Agent  
Alvarado Minn.

## Independent Grain Co.

Alvarado, Minn.

Looking back upon its first year's business, this Company has good reason to feel satisfied with the result and to look hopefully to the future. We want to thank our customers for the business with which they have favored us, and hope by fair dealing and prompt service to merit a continuation of their patronage in the year to come.

Following a good time-honored custom at this time of the year we wish all our patrons and friends

A MERRY CHRISTMAS

and a

PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR

H. A. Nystrom, Manager

# CONFIDENCE

## Our Main Cornerstone

The little word "confidence" and what it stands for, enters into nearly all relations of life, whether relating to business, to government, or to mere social affairs.

Commerce is built largely on confidence. In Banking confidence is the main corner stone. In church and state, in school and home, confidence is an all-important factor. Lack of confidence between capital and labor, employer and employee, the people and the government is largely responsible for the present unrest. The want of confidence breeds suspicion and distrust. Remove the confidence of the people from any institution of whatever nature and it soon totters and falls.

The confidence reposed in this Bank, the State Bank of Alvarado, by the people of this community, is the source of its strength and the cause of progress. Already this bank since it was established in 1905 has outgrown two bank buildings, that were deemed adequate when erected. Our third banking home, commodious, modern and up-to-date, is now under construction and will be ready to move into in February next. In our new home we will have the best facilities for serving our patrons. Your business is solicited. Our aim in the future, as it has been in the past, will be to merit and to retain the confidence of the people to whom we owe our success.

At this joyous season of the year, we take this opportunity to thank our patrons and friends for the business entrusted to us, and to wish one and all a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

## State Bank of Alvarado

L. M. OLSON, President F. E. DAHLGREN, Cashier  
M. H. SANDS, Vice President W. F. MALM, Assistant Cashier

## The Season's Greetings

Closing our books for the year without thanking our patrons and friends for the business they have given us—would leave one of our principal debts unpaid.

With more settled business conditions in the Nation, we look forward to even a bigger and better year in 1920.

We handle the celebrated Twin City Tractors, and will have a carload delivered here in February. Place your order with us without delay.

We also have the agency for the Reo and Oakland Automobiles and other standard cars, that give the very best satisfaction to thousands of users.

A large stock of auto accessories and supplies always on hand. Fireproof Garage.

We appreciate your business. We wish all our patrons a Merry Christmas and a Bright and Bountiful New Year.

## MINNESOTA AUTO CO.