

Law of Wages

SIRS: There have been two unfortunate factors in the recent labor troubles which should be eliminated. One of these has been the authority exercised by the Department of Labor in establishing arbitrary scales of wages in defense areas, in one instance nearly three times the normal scale previously in existence. The second factor for trouble has been the authority exercised by the War Labor Board in requiring one employer after another to raise the pay of their employees. This has resulted in the assumption on the part of labor leaders and others that the government is qualified to stipulate just what wages should be paid for labor. Such, of course, is not the case. It is not within the legitimate province of government to fix wages, hours of labor, prices, or rentals, or to make use of the subterfuge of subsidies. Up to very recent times the rule in the United States and with other free people has been that these values have been subject only to the law of supply and demand, a natural law and therefore a law of divine authority.

More than fifty years ago, an American philosopher gave to the world the result of his thorough investigation into the subject of social problems by which he demonstrated in his masterpiece, "Progress and Poverty," that simple compliance with natural law including a most important law, obscured until that time, which he discovered, would produce prosperity of the highest order, while continued violation of natural law would result in social disorder, poverty and violence.

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