

# Raise Wages, Don't Lower Them

The wisdom of professors is astounding. Now one has ascertained how much more I want to eat, how many socks would satisfy your fancy, how many more nice underthings would gladden milady's heart. The answer is: Just one third more.

For Professor Harold F. Clark (in charge of educational economics at Teachers College, Columbia University) and his corps of assistants have devoted several years to computing statistics on the annual incomes of almost every working group in the United States. And from these painstaking studies it has been learned that the average American would like to earn one third more money than he is making at present. It is not reported whether this is the summum bonum of man's desires. Professor Clark is not on record as to what the American will want when, as and if he gets an increase of 33 1/3 per cent in his wages. For the nonce such an advance will prove satisfactory.

Some of the statistics provided by Professor Clark are interesting, even though the conclusions drawn from them may seem superficial. For instance, here is a table that reveals the average earnings in dollars for a year of various working groups, between 1920 and 1936.

Medicine	\$4,850
Law	4,730
Engineering	4,410
Dentistry	4,170
Architecture	3,820
College Teaching	3,050
Journalism	2,120
Library Work	2,020
Ministry	1,980
Skilled Trades	1,430
Public School Teaching	1,350
Nursing	1,310
Unskilled Labor	795
Farming	580
Farm Labor	485

To one who understands the law of wages these figures mean that the wages of the most skilled workers are determined by the wages of the least skilled. That the very lowest

paid labor in the United States is "farm labor." And the next logical step, which some of our academicians seem determined not to see, is that the lowest earnings of those who farm are obtained on the poorest land—the margin of production. The way to raise the general level of wages, then, if that is the social aim, is to raise the margin, by the very simple and obvious plan of discouraging the holding of land out of use for a rise in price.

That is not the lesson Professor Clark has learned from his very revealing facts and figures. To him they simply mean: "The professions need more people in them. Professional service is a type of service that people are willing to pay more for because it is scarce." Scarce, for how long?

—F. C.

See: "Progress and Poverty," pp. 206-214; "Teachers Manual (P. & P.)," L. IV, Q. 27, 28, 29, 30.