

The level of wages is higher now than at any time in the past, but even now close to half of the men working for wages are not making a family living wage and close to half of the women working for wages are not making enough to support themselves in reasonable comfort.

Great numbers of men and women working for a weekly or monthly salary are below the line of reasonable existence and still greater numbers have not shared proportionately in the increased productiveness of American industry and agriculture.

High wages are considered a guarantee of prosperity because they increase buying power and when spent keep the wheels of business moving. But farmers are a third of the consuming public and their buying power has actually decreased in the last seven years. Along with low paid wage and salaried workers in cities, they stand as a handicap to city prosperity, and a sure cause of inevitable industrial depression in this country.

Our prosperity now is not national because the farmers are not prosperous and because great numbers of city workers are not prosperous.

The best sign that prosperity is not widespread at home is the sending of so much money and goods abroad. Apart from war loans, there are eleven billion dollars of American investments abroad, two-fifths of this in Latin America, one-fourth in Europe, slightly more than a fourth in Canada and one-twelfth in the rest of the world. At the same time the flow of goods abroad is increasing and we are depending more and more upon sales abroad as an outlet for goods produced here.

The fact that citizens of the United States can invest so much abroad under the present distribution of wealth and income at home shows how top heavy and unnatural our prosperity is. The fact that the dependence on foreign markets is increasing shows again that, even with the great productive capacity of the United States there is something wrong with the domestic market,—an inability among large portions of the population to buy up the goods produced,—an inequitable distribution of the national income.

Indeed, much of the phenomenal selling of goods at home is based on instalment buying by wage and salaried workers who are mortgaging an essentially insecure future to buy goods now. Their future is insecure not alone because industrial depression will come again. It is insecure precisely because their holding of their positions depends immediately and directly on the will of others. Through the purchase of goods, usually non-essentials, on long-term payments extending into an uncertain future, they are bolstering up present business and present production. When industrial depression comes, they will miss payments and lose their goods and have nothing to show for their work except memories.—*Holy Name Journal*.

Public Opinion Veering in Our Direction

THE theory of Henry George with regard to natural resources and of prohibitionists with regard to liquor, is no doubt the true one, namely, that it is wrong to demand of the public payment for that to which the holder has no moral claim. There is generally admitted to be some such thing as vested right. But after sufficient warning the holder forfeits that. The time comes when revolution takes the place of compensation. England paid for the slaves when she abolished slavery in 1840. Slavery persisted for twenty-five years longer in the United States and then took up arms in its own defence, with resultant desolation and no compensation. The despotic claims of landlords, which were gradually giving way in Britain before developing democracy, and which are now ripe for further devolution, but not yet without compensation, were wiped out in France at one fell swoop, and without compensation; so also more than a century later in Russia.

Public opinion in Britain, as, indeed, everywhere is continuously veering toward Henry George's view of taxing away the unearned increment in land values. Indeed, owing to war necessities, many estates there have already become through taxation more of a burden than an asset. For them also, as well as for the mine owners, it might be well to handle what is fondly called real property as a diminishing value.—*Montreal Witness*.

Hands Across The Sea

LOCAL taxpayers, staggering under ever-increasing assessments for municipal extensions and extravagances they can not afford and do not want, and who lack the stamina to combine and stop them, may find temporary solace, if not succor, in the following letter sent to an English bank:

"Dear Sir: For the following reasons, I regret being unable to reduce my overdraft. I have been held up, held down, sandbagged, walked on, sat upon, flattened out and squeezed by our income tax, the super tax, the excess profits tax, war loans, war bonds, war savings certificates, the automobile tax, and by every society and organization that the inventive mind of men can conceive to extract what I may or may not have in my possession.

"By the Red Cross, Blue Cross, St. Dunstan's, the Children's home, the Y. M. C. A., the Y. W. C. A., the Salvation Army, the Belgian relief, the Austrian relief, the Black Cross, the Double Cross, and every hospital in the town and country.

"The government has governed my business so that I do not know who owns it. I am inspected, suspected, examined and re-examined, informed, required and commanded, so that I don't know who I am, or why I am here.