



Kindergarden Wages

Farm wages are pretty much on the child-labor basis. In 1923 three squares, (meals) a room and \$33 a month were the wages of farm laborers. The figures are those of the Sears-Roebuck Agricultural foundation—laugh if you want to—and they no doubt are the average wage of all farm labor including those of the Industrial Union No. 110, which, owing to organized demands, necessarily are much higher—the figures, in addition, are based on “government sources.”

It is plain to be seen that \$33 a month, \$1.10 a day, makes no provision for the upkeep of a woman save when that agricultural worker happens to be a woman. But even then, in the latter case, it doesn't alter our contention that farm wages are based on child-labor.

Not only are the wages based on the earnings of those, of the children, that get paid but, in addition to this, full grown citizens—at a marriageable age—are made to compete with those of the children *that do not receive wages.*

Although, in the case where the farm worker boards himself the wages average \$47 a month, we cannot stray far from the original proposition, that of \$33 a month; since farm labor is as a rule synonymous with board, if not with room, which too often proves to be an attic or hayloft. Our contention is, that \$33 a month will not begin to take care of the demands made upon us by our “better half” (if we have one) and we insist that such a figure will pay only the house rent; that it is at variance with the capitalist system and prevents our participation in the affairs of full grown men. Such wages place us at an *equality with kids in knee-breeches, and if continued will have a deleterious effect upon the morals of farm labor as a whole.*

Be it said, to the discredit of farmers, that they have made every effort to foster low wages and have employed children, their own or others, with or without pay, to beat full grown women—thus incapacitating such men and women from the ordinary pursuits; diverting them from purposes for which nature intended them.

And now it develops the industrial commissars (of capital) have made arrangements for a six per cent less demand, or 89 per cent normal compared to 95 per cent last year. This means that six men will be added to every 100 unemployed to swell the platoons of the idle. This means there will be six per cent less prosperity than last year—allowing for the prosperity that didn't materialize. Something like this will hold good for the whole damn system—six per cent less.

In so far as this was intended for a farm article (now changed) it wouldn't be right if I failed to go on record with an anecdote showing the ingrained nature of the farmer:

It happened in a state where capital punishment is the custom. A farmer's boy was to be hung for practising what he learned in France. His father came to see him in jail, and, after the usual niceties were passed over, the boy inquired: “Well, dad, are ye coming out to see me hung?” “Wa'al,” drawled the farmer, “I reckon I will, if it's too wet to plow.”

The farmers lot surely is hard—in order to have the pleasure of seeing his son “off” he must suffer a double calamity—lose a son and a day from the plow.