

Brookings Institution of Washington, reaches the conclusion that there are about 6,500,000 individual shareholders of investor-owned corporations. It was found by the survey—contrary to the opinions often heard—that 32 per cent of the shareholders were from families having incomes under \$5,000 annually, 44 per cent had incomes of \$5,000-\$10,000, and only 24 per cent had incomes over \$10,000.

WHAT ARE "HUMAN RIGHTS"?

NOW WHAT about the so-called human rights that are represented as superior to property rights? What about the "right" to a job, the "right" to a standard of living, the "right" to a minimum wage or a maximum workweek, the "right" to a "fair" price, the "right" to bargain collectively, the "right" to security against the adversities and hazards of life, such as old age and disability?

The framers of the Constitution would have been astonished to hear these things spoken of as rights. They are not immunities from governmental compulsion; on the contrary, they are demands for new forms of governmental compulsion. They are not claims to the product of one's own labor; they are, in some if not in most cases, claims to the products of other people's labor.

These "human rights" are indeed different from property rights, for they rest on a denial of the basic concept of property rights. They are not freedoms or immunities assured to all persons alike. They are special privileges conferred upon some persons at the expense of others. The real distinction is not between property rights and human rights, but between equality of protection from governmental compulsion on the one hand and demands for the exercise of such compulsion for the benefit of favored groups on the other.

THE "RIGHT" TO A JOB

TO POINT out these characteristics of the so-called human rights is not to deny the reality nor belittle the importance of the social problems they represent. Some of these problems are real and important. They are also complex, and in this further respect they are different from the rights guaranteed by the Constitution.

There is no great difficulty nor danger in declaring that certain individual rights shall not be tampered with by the government—and in adhering to that principle. It is quite another matter to say that the government shall seize the property or curtail the freedom of some of its citizens for the benefit, or the supposed benefit, of others. To adopt this view is to cast both