provide the capital. For that would inevitably deplete the supply of tools, the consequence being diminished employment opportunities and lagging production.

This is not the place for a full discourse on inflation; but, at least, mention may be made of the difference between money wages and real wages. High money wages depend upon an abundance of money, which an unrestrained government can print into circulation. High real wages depend upon an abundance of consumable goods and services. Such abundance is the product of individuals working with adequate tools and facilities under the incentives of private ownership and personal freedom. How much a day's wages will buy depends upon how productive and creative have been the efforts of individuals.[5]

The Consumer's Role

In the foregoing analysis of the market relationship between an employer and an employee, little was said of the important role which each plays as a consumer. When owners and users of specific tools cooperate in a productive venture, their success depends upon how highly the product of their joint efforts is valued by consumers. The direct concern of the consumer pertains to the price and the quality of the product rather than to the welfare of any employer or employee who

might have helped produce it. As a consumer, each of us tries to buy cheaply. We compete for the "best buy," and thus encourage competition throughout the world of business.

An employee in an automobile plant is obliged to bargain, in competition against other employees, for the tools and raw materials he uses, but the fact that he is willing and able to help produce a finished automobile constitutes his real bargaining ability. And the value or strength of that bargaining ability depends in the final analysis upon what other employers and employees—consumers—are willing to offer in exchange for automobiles.

The purpose of production is to create something which may be consumed—which may have exchange value because it is wanted for consumption. If men of varying skills and with varying amounts of tools and other capital can improve their productivity by working together, let them bargain, for they have something constructive about which to bargain. But if they can't work together to increase their total productivity, then obviously neither could gain in bargaining power except at the other's expense. And life is too short for that kind of anti-social "bargaining." The opportunities for personal gain by giving something valuable in exchange are far more abundant and more rewarding than are the chances of taking advantage of the other fellow and getting away with it. The process of voluntary exchange