OUR TIMES

Time—The Weekly Newsmagazine dated Nov. 7, 1949 (any issue would do) serves as a cross section of our times and way of life.

YOUTH

On page 18 is related that:

"The national minimum wage was raised from 40¢ to 75¢ an hour last week. The bill signed into law by the President will give an estimated 1,500,000 workers a raise of around $300 million a year. Harry Truman called it 'a major victory in our fight to promote the general welfare,' and said it 'should result in the virtual elimination of the evil of child labor.'"

Let us not overlook the fact that "it wasn't quite as much a victory as it seemed" because as "Time" points out it eliminates from the law workers not "necessary" to production of goods in interstate commerce and specifically excluded "farm laborers, newspaper carriers, small telephone, telegraph, newspaper and logging operations; employees of most local stores and laundries." Also, according to "Time", lawyers are busy looking for "loopholes." After all, labor costs are a vital concern to those who must foot these bills. Big business is in a more favorable position to meet this minimum wage requirement than are the host of petty small businessmen.

What concern us, however, is that wages themselves merely reflect the cost of existence of the laborer and Congress is powerless to legislate economic forces. The proof of his economic servitude and dependence on the whims of the owners of his job is WAGES. It is not changes in the wage status but the elimination of the wage system that offers any hope to the workers.

What is to happen to the child eliminated from jobs because it does not pay to give them the minimum wage? Will his needs be taken care of? How obvious is the callousness of the defenders of the wage system. What bothers them is "does it pay?" and if it doesn't pay to hire kids then they boast about "eliminating the evils of child labor." So typical of the workings of all reforms, the elimination of child labor under capitalism means increased "juvenile delinquency," not a happy, wonderful childhood. Society today is not organized in such a manner as to make this possible.

On page 40 we find U. S. Commissioner of Education Earl J. McGrath illustrating the accuracy of the socialist indictment just stated above. He admits that

"78% of the nation's fifth-grade students who will be mentally qualified for college never get there and the result is that millions of U. S. citizens go through life functioning below the level of their potential."

Recognizing that poverty is the ONE barrier to useful lives, he proposes that there be established "an annual $300 million federal aid for college scholarships." But he reckons without his host. This is capitalist society. The very article dealing with the good wishes and high hopes of Commissioner McGrath presents the unanswerable question. It quotes Harvard Economist Seymour E. Harris whose book, "The Market Place for College Graduates," has just been published. In it, he criticizes such policies as McGrath's. Accordng to Harris:

"If the President's Commission on Higher Education (the forerunners of McGrath's proposal,) calling to double college enrollments by 1960 has its way, the U. S. would have 15 million living college graduates by 1970. If the same percentage of graduates aim for the professions as in the past (about 65%), there would have to be, to accommodate them, two or three times as many openings as exist in these prize fields now . . . Furthermore, college graduates could expect their salary advantages (over non-college men and women) to dip even more than it has. In 1940, the college man earned about 32% more than the American average; by 1948 he was making only 10% more. The time may come when, on an average, the college-trained worker will earn less than the non-college worker."

It is not possible for a market economy to function except in the terms and relationships of the dollar bill, notwithstanding its desires. What is actually taking place is the appearance of overproduction of qualified men side by side with the more highly developed techniques requiring less skills. So that highly trained men are a dollar a dozen. Thus is ambition rewarded.

INCENTIVE

The great apology for capitalism is that it fosters incentive because of the desire for money. We have just seen how the drive for "success", i. e., graduating college with financial advantages in mind, is working out. Many of us are aware of the history of inventors and inventions. The number of patents that have been sidetracked because they threatened profitable adventures exposes the fraud behind the claims of "humanity's interests." Today, with all the marvelous developments in science, society could be greatly advanced if all the newer discoveries were utilized. Atomic energy is a case in point. On page 21, Prof. Summer Slichter of Harvard dreams of a possible "atom-built, atom-powered U. S. wonderland." But, the considerations of the cash nexus are paramount. Things are reckoned in terms of cost. Use is of secondary consideration.

"Time," on page 70, points out that by a fluke, "fortunately for mankind" Dr. Selman Waksman of Rutgers University was permitted to continue "playing around with microbes." It seems that Rutgers was considering firing Dr. Waksman because his sort of work "never really paid off." Ironically, Dr. Waksman's work has hit a tremendous jackpot for Rutgers. Through his discovery of streptomycin the college has already received $2,000,000. It get 2¢ for every gram turned out by a dozen chemical companies. But, Dr. Waksman, — mystery of mysteries — was not imbued with the desire of money to accomplish his researches. Isn't it strange that, speaking generally, the motive that drives scientists and inventors is rarely money but their variations of ability. As the "Time" article put it: "For himself Dr. Waksman asks little."

HYPOCRICY

If there is one word that typifies capitalism, hypocricy is the word. The story of the Japanese General Yamashita is a good case in point. To listen to the propagandists of American democracy, the guarantee and assurance of "fair play" and "justice" is reliance on good old Uncle Sam. Of course, the Russians and Germans are different. Their totalitarian dictatorships crush all opposition and permit no expression of freedom. The story of Yamashita's trial reviewed in this issue of "Time" (p. 27), puts to shame the worst stories told of Hitler and Stalin. No wonder, that in spite of promises of freedom of press in Japan, that great fighter for democracy. MacArthur banned the A. Frank Reel's book, "The Case of General Yamashita" from distribution in Japan. He didn't dare to do otherwise. The way "Time" put it was: "This damning report on American justice might engender a bitter disillusionment." When one recalls the stories of the butcheries attributed to Yamashita, — spread to rally workers to a war that did not concern them and alien to their interests — the truth that is later revealed, vindicate the socialist accusations.

In the book review section of this issue of "Time" (p. 100) is revealed the lying hypocricies of the "wise and courageous attempts of Roosevelt and Churchill to set the world