

Fighting Forties have discredited the free market for good. Since the Thirties a great many ideas, contrary to the idea of freedom to shop, have embedded themselves in everybody's subconsciousness. These ideas, if we leave them there, can only handicap the development of our country's economy and the expansion of our standard of living.

For example, we are accustomed to hear, perhaps even to say, that the problem of production has been solved. It hasn't.

It will never be solved until everything people want has been made as cheap as the air we breathe. Until then, businessmen will have opportunities galore for finding cheaper and more efficient ways of making things. And out of two and one-half billion people on this globe, two billions would be glad of the chance to make for themselves all sorts of things that the most fortunate half-billion of us take for granted.

Common Interests

WE ARE used to thinking of various groups of people as necessarily opposed in their economic interests; in particular, that the interest of employees is in natural conflict with that of investors and businessmen. It's not.

The economic system is a means whereby people get together to produce things for them-

selves. The investor is the man who lends us the tools we work with. The businessman leads us through the productive process. Under the free market, all of us alike have the same interest in bigger and bigger production. There is no conflict of interests unless the market is not free.

We are disposed to think of employees as unfortunate underdogs, whom only enlightened laws now save from such ill-treatment and overwork and underpayment as they used to suffer at the hands of businessmen a century ago. They didn't.

The reason why people worked long hours for a low standard of living in the early factories and coal mines was that there were not enough tools to enable them to turn out enough of a product to earn them a better living in shorter hours. The reason why children of nine can stay in school, instead of working in cotton mills and coal mines as they did in nineteenth-century England, is that we have enough equipment to produce all the coal and cloth we need without putting children to work; and therefore are well enough off to keep them from starving, without falling back on what they can earn. In fact, neither public enlightenment, nor legislation, but only tools and equipment, have improved the living standards of all of us. Workers in this equipment-rich country are not underdogs. They are Canadians.