

STUDIES IN ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

No. 86 in the series of Monographs by writers connected with the London
School of Economics and Political Science.

WAGES AND THE STATE

WAGES AND THE STATE

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE
PROBLEMS OF STATE WAGE
REGULATION

BY

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LONDON

P. S. KING & SON, LTD.

ORCHARD HOUSE, 14 GREAT SMITH STREET
WESTMINSTER

1926

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

PREFACE.

STATE intervention in industry has extended to the field of wages during the last thirty years. Arbitration Courts and Wages Boards, established by the State, determine and enforce rates of wages in many parts of the world, and there is a considerable demand for the further extension of this regulation. As yet, no comparative study of the operation of the various systems has appeared. In this book I have attempted to discover what degree of State wage-regulation exists, and to describe how the various systems are working, in such a way as to emphasize the fundamental problems at issue.

The book is divided into three parts. Part I contains an account of the extent of wage-regulation and the methods adopted in different countries. In Parts II and III I have studied the institutions at work, and have endeavoured to discover the causes which have prevented their smooth operation. Some of these causes are merely technical and administrative, and are discussed in Part II. Much more important are the problems relating to the principles on which wages are to be fixed. These problems form the subject-matter of Part III. The principles are difficult to disentangle. The method I have adopted is to exhibit their mode of operation, and to estimate their value by a study of the modifications which experience of their working has rendered necessary.

The most pleasant experience that has attended the preparation of this book has been the extraordinary willingness to help shown not only by my

colleagues, but also by Government officials and the staffs of the Colonial Government libraries in London, and of the International Labour Office in Geneva. I should also like to place on record my obligations to members of Minimum Wage authorities in different parts of the world who have replied to my various detailed questionnaires. I owe an especial debt to Dr. Hugh Dalton, who has helped me with much critical advice during the three years this book has been in preparation, and to Professor Hobhouse and Mr. C. M. Lloyd, who read through my manuscript and who have helped me with many suggestions. I take this opportunity of gratefully acknowledging my indebtedness to my teacher Professor Cannan. Such merit as this book may possess as a contribution to theoretical economics, is entirely due to his influence. Mr. W. D. Sharp has performed the unenviable task of reading my proofs.

E. M. B.

LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS,
March, 1926.

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BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

THE list of Books, Articles and Official Papers which is given below does not pretend to be a complete Bibliography on the subject matter of this book. I have endeavoured as far as possible to select those references which bear directly upon the operation of wage-regulating laws in different parts of the world, and have omitted all references to the purely theoretical discussions. Reference is made to other works throughout the text. The object of this Note is to give the reader who desires to follow up some of the problems raised in this book, some indication of the most readily accessible material. The list is arranged geographically.

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