What Price Security:

Say what you will of this social structure I think we must admit that the foundation of a family community, the nation, international relation, that these are sound at least in attempt. They are the best that experience has given us in the super-structure on that which we have built these foundations we find security. The family goes to pieces for one or another of many reasons. The community dies, goes behind in material progress, has no leader of creative qualities developed to make the transfer from one productive agency to another - nations rise and fall - international relations crack. The super-structure has all kinds of rickety sections. Nevertheless, on the whole they stand unsatisfactory as they may be.

Now about the individual in this structure. What about you and me? How are we to find security for that is the individual problem within this society where we are placed? The practical process which we have developed, particularly in this country and which I think is essential in a country trying to be a democratic country, is that every adult should be a productive adult. I don't mean that every adult should have what we call a job, that is that it should be wages, but that he should be using his powers in creating. That is the value to society. In the material side he should be producing what we call wealth, and we have a rather fixed conviction about the way what we

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produce should be used. It should give us first a home, a place where our feet will be on the ground. And then it should give us a backlog to take care of responsibilities and old age. Take it as a nation and we have done very well in our one hundred and fifty years in producing wealth. The wealth in any particular year is measured by the fluctuating values which we give to property - a low year like 1932 when our wealth was estimated then according to the best authorities - $247,000,000,000. That is a big sum. The per capita wealth - $1981.00. I should say that was a low year. In 1934 and this is the last figure which the World Almanac is able to get our wealth was $286,000,000, which gave us a per capita wealth of $2263.00.

Now it is on this wealth that our income is built. In 1932 our income was something like forty million dollars, but we speat more than that. That is we spent forty nine billion in that year; we took nine and a half out of the secure backlog in which we had built up. It gives a great many people uneasiness. To continue it would mean that our possibilities of income would be greatly reduced; we wouldn't have so much to work on.

There is a great deal of misunderstood of this capital Dr. Townsend sees no reason why we should not use it, but if we take our individual experience with our capital we can see a reason. You started out at the depression with a hundred thousand dollars of what we call savings or capital. you know what has happened to those savings, savings of individuals and corporations of. They had to be used to carry us through. The weak point I think in our attitude towards this problem of national wealth and the individual relation to it is that we so little

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understand the nature of capital.

I had an experience in Italy for several months going up and down the country observing and getting acquainted with the machinery of the corporate states which were just coming into existence. I ran into some curious experiences that the country had gone through in the effort to stabilize itself after the war. You will remember there was a period when it looked very much as if the communistic and radical social element of Italy would take over the country. In the Northern parts of Italy, the industrial part - Piedmont and Lombardy particularly where the great successful industrial undertakings are - the communist labor organizations were so strong that they actually took over many of the great factories.-Turin where the big automobile works are. And the experience there was typical of what happened in other places where the factories were taken over. They simply took them and the management and the stockholders ware intelligent enough to see that it was quite useless for them to fight for it. They had nothing to fight with. They simply gave up and retired.

There are many of us who look on wealth in this way as money in the safe and we could only get access to the safe we would take out what we call our share. There is a general feeling that the few have got it all. There is nothing more common then to hear it said in this country that two percent of the people possess ninety eight or something like that of the wealth. It is a good thing to study statistics of the division of wealth. And here are some figures which are the most reliable in my judgment made out by Robert R. Doan.

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Now according to Mr. Jones the wealth of this country in 1932 was a little over two hundred and fifty three billion. According to the authorities and a great many of our own this wealth. Now what are the facts about it? We find that the highest of all classes which I think last year was number twenty six, that is the people who have an income of a million or more that this upper class owns four tenths of one percent. It is not until you get down to the class of those having incomes between twenty five and fifty thousand that they own more than one percent of wealth. Three and eighteen percent of this wealth is owned by people with incomes between five and ten. And here is the astonishing thing - ninety two and sixteen percent of million dollar incomes own a little over one half of one percent of the wealth in the country. People who have incomes from twenty five to fifty thousand dollars own three times as much or ten times as much and thirty two and a half percent. A still larger portion is owned by people from five to ten thousand incomes. Nearly eighty percent of the private wealth holdings in this United States belong to people who have incomes under five thousand dollars. That is, it is really the person of very modest means who has his hands on the wealth in this country and this is carried out in spite of all your impressions. If you come to analyze what wealth is put into .

It is an intertesting thing according to what Mr. Doan shows is that the very wealthy, the bulk of their holdings are in paper claims. And from what happened to paper claims in 1929 and since

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we know that the part of our population which owned eighty percent, people having incomes of five thousand have it in actual physical properties. First they have it in homes. I didn't believe until I had reliable figures put before me that half of the thirty million families in this country own their own homes. Very ~~good~~ fair homes, somebody threw at me. There are great numbers of good homes in this country.

Life insurance equities which amount to something over fourteen billion are largely in the low bracket numbers. It is the poor people that own ninety six percent of the savings and other deposits; they own ninety two percent of the personal property of the country - general property, real and personal.

What does that mean to you and me and to those who in one way or another we are responsible, those whom we would direct as parents or teachers or friends? What does it mean? Is there a practical program which we must follow and which we must teach if we are to increase the number of those who work out their own material security, who produce sufficiently to have the home and the backlog, and not have to fall back on unearned pensions, unearned homes, who are able to keep that fine self-respect and independence which comes from having mastered your material ?

Well, I put with emphasis the first part in securing and individual productive, really productive, discipline and training. I believe that the most important thing that has been demonstrated in the experiments that we have been

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making to take care of the unemployed, the chief demonstration why they are unemployed is lack of discipline and training.

I have been much interested in the experience in the town of Bridgeport which is the metropolis to my home in the country - my nearest big town. Bridgeport as a manufacturing town was terribly shattered by the depression. Last year its factories have been working some of them I believe at full capacity. But those factories, most of them high grade, requiring skilled men or at least semi-skilled men / have been hard put to it to fill their ranks with competent men. because they did not take on the quantities of men on public relief. I put the problem up to a man whom I knew well who in the depression had been a man of all work around my own little premises in the country and a skilled workmen had easily found a machine, why it was. He was very interesting - a man must know his machine, he must know his machine as he knows a car. And he is dangerous on a machine even if you do the same thing over as he is driving a car if he does not know how it is made. and over/ And Peter told me interesting stories of the effort to hire men who claimed experience and who might endanger an entire factory by their ignorance.

Another point which he made that was interesting was the fact so many men during the depression lost their skill. "How did you keep yours?" I asked him. And he said, "Because I always worked at a machine. I knew that was where I belonged; I did not want to lose my machine out of my mind." He, himself, had trained men, had been under his supervision. A man who he said once had been a fairly skilled machanic and who had for five years had lost the feel of the thing, lost his courage and I think

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according to Peter, he brought him back.

Now you find in all our trades and professions a great pressure, great numbers of people who cannot be placed because they have no discipline and no training. ~~training which~~

Here is an experience that an acquaintance of mine has recently had. He advertised without giving his name or his magazine for a young man, ambitious for productive magazine work - of course he must be expert. He had a thousand applicants and out of those applicants there was not one. I think this goes on in all departments of activity - the young man who has taken a theoretical training and who does not understand and does not grasp the fact that the theory must be made to work in practice. It is a great problem in high-grade enterprises where engineering skill is required - the problem in the household, in all forms of service - untrained people, contemptuous perhaps for the job, impressed with the fact that society owes them a living. Whatever their theory may be society gives no living unless you can give the returns that it demands.

So I emphasize that in this matter of security the price we must pay individually, collectively, is training, more training, still more training, discipline, more discipline, still more discipline. The price is too high for many, but it is the only price which really promises much.

A very interesting side to me and I think very important is that when your skill may go begging as it has so often in these last few years - there was no work perhaps for the highly

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trained doctor, the highly mechanic, the highly trained financial man, that here comes in what I am trying to think is one of the most important matters in this preparing for security, and that is the necessity of having an odd job. We do not realize the extent of the income.

To quote Mr. Doan again. In 1927 there was twelve billion dollars earned by men and women in the United States out of odd jobs and these jobs were in all the professions in all the industries. When you come to analyze this depression and find out how people who have not gone on the dole, who have not had backlogs to carry them through have "made it", as we say, I am inclined to think that you will find that the odd job has played an enormous part in keeping the feet on the ground. There is one side to it that I think is not sufficiently understood and that is where you have an odd job it is nearly always something that you see to do. You may call it a creative thing. You offer yourself, the thing is not given to you, but you say, "I can do this - I am willing to do it." There is a great deal of the creative in the odd job, in undertakings which begin as odd jobs.

I have example after example in my own experience of people who have worked out substantial places for themselves, substantial little businesses for themselves because they saw something they might do when they lost their positions, might do on a very small scale but it was creating something and they built

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it up. One of the most successful young women in the publishing world at the present moment has built up a trade in this way, thrown out of a good position. She was not willing to walk the streets. There was too much time and she sat down with her wits and said, "Where is there something that isn't being done in this trade that I might do on a small scale." And she offered herself; she offered her idea and gradually she has worked it up until she has a fine independent business.

A man standing high in knowledge and experience in New England industries told me two years ago at the time when things were the lowest all over New England there are people starting in a very small way on some idea that they had. They have made a sacrifice but they are going to come out of this thing with new businesses. They have created something.

Now the odd job is a great field for creative energy and I believe that every one of us ought to have that as a sort of an anchor

This is our own individual effort, but always there may be difficulty in carrying them out. There may be a time when you have to step aside and think it over. This is where most particularly in this social structure of ours the home and the community come in - the place where we belong. The revolt from the home and the revolt from the community are two of the most unsafe practices that I know in the social system. There is nothing that more threatens the social security in not leaving yourself a line in retreat. It is a war this thing of security and when you cut off a you are like a general in the battle.

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I belong to a period when revolt from home and revolt from the home town were common. All my working life here in New York which extends over forty years I have constantly been in contact with the young woman who felt she had done a wise and noble thing because she had freedom from family and community.

Some of the greatest tragedies that I have known - and there are many of them among young women in this town - have been because she had not kept the line of retreat open.

Quote Owen Lovejoy - quote Easton township.
A place to go to in time of trouble.

Now we will admit all of this means some sacrifice of freedom. And there is what security, if you want it, does mean - it means you have to play your game inside a structure which depands that you work with it and not against it. It demands that you do not pull down homes or communities or the nation and that you do not wantonly refuse co-operation with other nations. What is freedom? Freedom is not in the outward material things, outward material things require sacrifice of frequently of our dearest ambitions, our tastes and our desires. But there is not such thing as exterior freedom; it is all an interior matter. Wherever you take on any relation you sacrifice an amount of freedom.

Take this matter of marriage that so many women shirk, desire to shirk at least because it may interfere with this thing they call their freedom. You don't get freedom by earning your living even in a very independent job. You must do it according to the laws of the material world in which you stay

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and sometimes it makes terrible slaves of us.

In all these things it is whether or no you can keep yourself interiorly free. I like to quote Emerson. Whenever an essential factor of - the price you pay for security - ~~the price you pay for~~ a man's sacrifice and responsibility of taking care of somebody else. And I think one of the most important things is what we call neighborliness. It is the greatest social we have.- Affection in the family - the good neighbor in the community - the good neighbor in the nation - the good neighbor in international relations. But this requires a sacrifice, requires a sacrifice of our intolerance which is so precious to us, without predjudices which are equally precious, of our opinions taken because we must have an opinion, pride of an opinion. The good neighbor means consideration of others; it means the saneness to admit that he may have something on his side even if I cannot see it, that he is a large person. It means contempt for jealously and greed. A neighbor is one who tries to understand and tries to contribute to the weakness of the others. Basically this social program that we are trying to put into operation now is care of the old, the care of the orphan child, looking after the man through no fault of his own is out of employment, the improvement of the ethical relations, in the development of the ethical code in business practices. These are all things which basically are expressions of neighborliness. Since the beginning of this

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country we have felt that it was our duty for our security where men and women and children were uncared for to care for them and we have been gradually developing machinery. I should say this social program we have now, whatever its defects and I am inclined to think they are considerable, the story is the nationalization of the idea of the good neighbor. Of course

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