

Lincoln speech

Excerpt of Abraham Lincoln's Speech on Free Labor vs. Slave Labor (1859)

(Address before the Wisconsin State Agricultural Society - so before he became president in 1861)

To understand this text you need to know the following words:

Labor	dispute	independent	assembly	hired laborers	prudent
Wages	surplus	his own account	advocate	prosperous	Improvement of condition
dependent	improvidence	folly	misfortune		

The world is agreed that labor is the source from which human wants are mainly supplied. There is no dispute upon this point.

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Many independent men in this assembly doubtless a few years ago were hired laborers. And their case is almost, if not quite, the general rule. The prudent, penniless beginner in the world

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labors for wages awhile, saves a surplus with which to buy tools or land for himself, then labors on his own account another while, and at length hires another new beginner to help him. This, say its advocates, is free labor – the just, and generous, and prosperous system, which opens the way for all, gives hope to all, and energy, and progress, and improvement of condition to all. If any continue through life in the condition of the hired laborer, it is not the fault of the system, but because of either a dependent nature which prefers it, or improvidence, folly, or singular misfortune.

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