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An Interview with Henry Ford - January 13, 1914

After the Five Dollar Day emerged in 1914, Henry Ford did countless interviews. In this one, conducted by W. H. Alburn of *The Chicago Daybook* on January 13 just eight days after the plan was announced, he describes why he chose to give $10,000,000 of his profits to his employees. Alburn describes Ford as “neatly and simply dressed in clothes that one of his own mechanics could afford.” Alburn plays up Ford’s altruistic image, yet making him seem down to earth and human. Ford is quoted, saying, “The cause of labor troubles has been that the capitalists have grabbed too much of the profits. That makes the laborers poor, discontented, and INEFFICENT.” This shows Ford’s balance of ideas between philanthropy and profitable industry. Citing Thomas Edison, Ford insists that all businesses are capable of increasing the wages of their workers as well and they have no excuses no to. 1

The interviewer challenges Ford somewhat, asking him if he would want to live on five dollars a day. He quickly changes the subject and ends the interview saying that he does not want to have a legacy of wealth, but rather he wants to give back his profits. This is an important insight into Henry Ford’s character, showing that some of what he may be saying is for the benefit of good publicity, but he also truly wanted to share the good fortune that he has had in life, through reforms such as the Five Dollar Day.1

1. W. H. Alburn, “,” *Chicago Daybook*, 3, No. 89 (1914) : 1-3. Accessed Sept. 9, 2012.

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045487/1914-01-13/ed-2/seq-1/>