ES., to the NEWS
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PURCHASING POWER

Comparisons of standards of living and purchasing power between the United States and foreign countries usually leave me wondering about their validity because of the obvious statistical barrier posed by the different money systems.

Now, a respected international journal has published a meaningful comparison of eight major countries by showing the buying power of wage earners in different occupations expressed, not in money, but in the working time required to buy common consumer items. The resulting chart is a blockbuster that provides new proof of the superiority of the American system in providing more material goods to more people than any nation in history.

Compare, for example, the purchase of 22 pounds of sugar by a nurse. The American nurse can buy the sugar with one hour of work, the English nurse with four hours, 17 minutes of work, the Japanese nurse with four hours, 50 minutes of work, the Polish nurse with six hours, 48 minutes of work, and the Russian nurse must work 16 hours to buy the same amount of sugar.

What if you are a skilled laborer trying to buy a pair of men's shoes? The American can buy them with 6 hours of work, the Japanese with 10 hours of work, the Englis:tuian with 15 hours of work, the Frenchman with 16 hours of work, and it takes the Russian laborer 45 hours or an entire week of work to buy one pair of shoes.

Now take the case of an engineer buying a man's suit. In America,

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it takes him 12 hours of work, in England 20 hours of work, in Sweden 22 hours of work, in Japan 34 hours of work. The Russian engineer has to work 162 hours or about a full month in order to buy a man's suit.

What if you are a teacher and you want to buy an automobile? In the United States, it takes you 2½ months of work, in Japan 4½ months of work, in England 7 months of work. The Russian teacher must work one year and three months to earn enough to buy an auto mobile, and the Polish teacher must work four years.

All these figures are based on average or middle rates. For example, the skilled laborer's work time is calculated on the average for five skilled trades, from welder to motor mechanic.

The statistics were compiled from a wide variety of official, semi-official and private sources, including the Organization of Economic Development and Cooperation, the International Work Bureau, the Union de Banques Suisses, the French-based Centre of Research and Documentation on Consumption and the Centre of Study into Revenue and Costs. Private research organizations helped to fill in the gaps.

Anyone who wants to exchange our American economic system for the Socialist failures in other countries had better prepare himself for an abrupt reduction in standard of living caused by having to work up to 16 times longer for ordinary consumer necessities.

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