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Wages and social unrest

W: Sarah, when it comes to choosing a job, what rank first in order of importance for you?

Sarah: to be honest, my priority is the salary. Why?

W: Well, my brother in law used to put in twelve-hour days and to have very high wages. He is now his own boss and is much happier although he doesn't earn as much. So I was wondering what was people's motivation when they look for a job.

Sarah: It may depend on many facts. In the case of your brother in law, he probably wondered what was the good of earning so much money when you don't have the time to spend it.

W: You're right. He also told me that the workers in his former company found it more and more difficult to accept the huge salaries paid to CEOs, especially when they were denied a wage rise.

Sarah: That's why unions were created for at the beginning. French unions may have lost influence but they can still bring the country to a standstill.

W: How come?

Sarah: well unions argue that salaries are not keeping pace with the rise in the cost of living, and they can decide to call a strike. So it is sometimes better to offer a pay rise than be in for a long strike.

W: As far as United Kingdom is concerned, British union membership is nowhere near what it was before Margaret Thatcher.

Sarah: at least, in France and many other countries they've set minimum wages with the intention of protecting the living standards of workers in low-paid jobs.

W: Yes, but the EU cannot hope to compete with low-wage countries as long as its unions continue to hold such ways in companies.



GLOSSARY:

Wages and social unrest	The people's motivation
To come to	What is the good
To choose/chose/chosen	The workers
To rank	His former company
To put in	The huge salaries
To earn	CEOs
To look for	A wage rise
To spend	Unions
To accept	The cost of living
To be denied	A strike
To bring to a standstill	A pay rise
To argue	Union membership
To keep pace	Minimum wages
To call a strike	The living standards
To be in for	Low-paid jobs
To set	low-wage countries
To compete	Much happier
To continue	Although
To hold	As much
Order of importance	In the case
The salary	At the beginning
my brother in law	Nowhere near
Twelve-hour days	As long as
Very high wages	
His own boss	



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