OUR FARMERS GLUM AS RAINS CONTINUE

The Rain Gods Get a Cursing Out as Deluge Prevents Work

"It never rains but it pours" has been literally true at Commonwealth this spring. The farm manager and his crew anxiously watch the skies from day to day as they try to catch up between inundations with the farm work, which is about three weeks behind schedule.

Everybody who reads knows, of course, of the unprecedented rains and floods that have afflicted the Southwest this spring. While the floods do not bother the Commoners, as the highlands are not affected, the rains are a great nuisance. Every few days the rain comes down in torrents and even though it clears up brightly it does not remain that way long enough to get much agricultural work done.

The farm crew planned to have the corn planted by the 15th of April. They did not get it in until the 15th of May. They expected to have the first sweet potato slips in the ground the 1st of May, but could not plow the ground for them until the 12th of the month. The planting of peanuts, Mong beans, melons, higera, and all other crops has been delayed. As the growing season in this region is very short, good crops anyway provided there is sufficient rain later in the season.

The crops that were planted before the heavy rains began are looking fine. There is a hundred per cent stand of Prizetaker onions, of which 30,000 were set out. The Irish potatoes blossomed the 1st of May and promise a good yield ready for digging by the middle of June.

But our farmers watch the mountains on the western and northern edge of the valley out of the tails of their eyes as they urge the horses onward with the plows. At any moment someone may shout, "Here comes another!" Then it is a race between the horses and the storm.

When a man has not a good reason for doing a thing, he has one good reason for letting it alone.—Sir W. Scott.

Thanks, Your Honor

Washington, D. C., May 6, 1927.

Dear Dr. Zeuch:

I enclose, with my best wishes, a check ($100) for the College—
to be used for such purposes as you deem most desirable.

Cordially,

LOUIS D. BRANDEIS.

This unsolicited and unexpected token of interest in and aid for our experimental educational project for workmen is highly pleasing and encouraging to the Commoners.

Dr. Zeuch opines that the sum will buy about thirty barrels of cement toward the building of our little hydro-electric plant which we hope to find the time to construct during the summer and coming autumn.

SOME COWS

Milk! Yams of milk! Buckets of milk! Crocks and churns of milk! Commonwealth has three cows. Two Jerseys and a Holstein. The barn boss calls them Red and Mouse-Face and Spot. Just three, but, oh, my!

It would be useless to tell you how many pints or quarts or gallons of milk they give a day. Figures are so inexpressive. And, anyway, it is doubtful if anyone has ever measured it. But there are twenty-five of us in the modest crew this summer, and we have all the milk we can possibly drink—three times a day and seven days a week. We have milk for ice cream, until no one cares for it any more. We have milk to churn for butter. We have milk for cottage cheese, until everyone is fed up on cottage cheese. We feed whey and clabber and such like to the chickens and the pigs and the neighbor's hounds. Every available receptacle is full of milk. Mildred, the boss cook, has ordered cheese cloth and the other essentials and says she is going to start a cheese factory. Let us hope she doesn't make limburger.

It is "grass time," of course, and pasture is good. But they really haven't gained so very much. Nor are they all fresh. The two Jerseys are at the stage where, according to custom, they should be "turned dry." But they refuse to go dry. They waddle home at night dripping milk at every step.

RED, REDDER, REDDEST AT COMMONWEALTH

A Red "True Story" Ready-made for the American Legion, the Civic Federation, Matt Woll, and Other 150 Per Centers

In aluminum kettles, in dishpans, in water buckets, in almost every imaginable kind of kitchen container, a red, red flood is flowing almost daily at Commonwealth, from the strawberry patch to the canning tables. Carmined lips, gory fingers, red-stained dresses, cardinal knickers and trousers tell their tale: strawberry picking is on.

Father Zeuch leads this Red Army in the field. Ruthlessly he gets his recruits from whatever departments he can beg, borrow or steal them. Nor is he above coercion, duress and suborning.

The Aromas were set out last year and so came into their first bearing this spring. There is a very large yield of big, beautiful, excellent-flavored berries. The job of getting picking done is difficult during this season of heavy work. Consequently, some evenings the pickers do finish the red harvest until the sun sets behind Cedar Mountain.

Mrs. O'Hare is doing her best, with help, to stem the crimson flood and turn it into preserves, jam, and whatever else it is that they make from the red, red fruit. Quarts and quarts on the shelves attest the success of her efforts. Then, too, about twenty-five resident Commoners do all they can almost every meal-time to relieve her of the necessity of canning. They do not make much of a dent on the crop, however. From day to day the red field looks redder and redder.

"Chip-Will's-a-Widow"

Do you know the whippoorwill? It is a bit smaller than a quail. Its prevailing color is brownish-gray, with sharp black streaks on the head and back. Its wings are barred with reddish-brown. It has short legs and stumpy toes. It is a night bird, and lives principally on insects which it captures on the wing; its short, wide, hair-lined bill or mouth being especially adapted to this purpose. Be.

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WAGES
By WILLIAM EDWARD ZEUCH

I
One of the most surprising and pernicious doctrines that has found lodgment in strange places of recent years is that the way to increase wages is to increase productivity."

It would seem that only an elementary knowledge of economic principles or even a cursory examination of economic facts would forestall such an erroneous conclusion. Yet such a statement is being made, not by employers alone, who, knowing better, would have the workers believe it, but by reputable labor leaders.

Every competent economic statistician knows that the per capita production of American workers has increased markedly during the past twenty years. At the same time every student of labor conditions knows that there has been no corresponding rise in the real wages of the American worker during the same period. The increase in per capita production did not bring with it any correlative increase in real wages."

II
The confusion in the minds of some labor leaders on this subject seems to arise from the fact that they do not realize that physical production does not necessarily mean value production. An increased per capita production on the part of individual laborers leads to an increase in the total volume of goods on the market, or else it makes possible the discharge of a number of workers in the particular industry. Now an increase of the total volume of production results in an increase of the total value of the total volume only so long as there is sufficient demand on the market to take off the product at about the same or an increased price per unit of supply. When the increased productivity of the individual worker leads to such an increase of the total supply as to overstock the market, then the value or price of the total supply will fall and the employer will be in a poorer position even to employ his workers at the previously prevailing wage rate, much less to increase the wages.

If anyone told the cotton farmers that the way to increase their income was to increase their production he would be considered a fool and treated accordingly. If any farm leader were to tell the corn farmers that the way to better their economic condition was to raise more corn to the acre and to plant more acres he would be laughed and ridiculed out of his leadership. The cotton farmers and the corn farmers have learned from bitter experience that an increased physical production is not synonymous with an increased value production. To their sorrow they have found out that big crops do not mean big money.

It is almost unbelievable that any man who has been in the labor movement long enough to become a labor leader should remain in ignorance of these elementary economic facts. Yet some labor leaders are preaching elimination of waste, greater efficiency in production, and a speeding up of the individual worker's wages. They parrot the employers' lie that "the way to get more is to produce more." It seems very strange that some of the labor leaders who are parroting this canard had their training in the mining industry which is notoriously suffering from too much efficiency and too many workers; in other words, from too much production.

III
Wages are not determined by the physical productivity of the laborer. Within certain definite limits wages are determined by the economic and political power of the organized workers.

No wages for any great length of time can fall below the subsistence level of the workers. Likewise, no wages for any given time can be higher than the value productivity of the workers. Just where the wage will be in any industry between the lower limit of the subsistence level and the upper limit of the value of the goods produced is determined by the economic power of the workers in that particular industry and the organized political power of the workers generally.

In our modern capitalist society, every business organizer must get sufficient value (money) return from his enterprise to pay his costs, that is, his rent, interest, insurance against risks, wages and a sufficient managerial wage or salary to keep him in the business. Assuming the continuation of capitalism, the organized workers must always leave the business organizer sufficient to pay the other-than-wage costs and a profit generous enough to keep him in business. Under capitalism, the upper limit of wages must always be, assuming that the economic and political power of the organized workers is sufficient to get it, determined

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Society Notes

Uncle Rube: The college truck was sent to Sallisaw, Oklahoma, the early part of May, to move H. H. (Rube) Munson and his haystack of chickens, the Crown Comb White Leghorns, to Commonwealth, where Mr. Munson will take charge of the poultry department. The sense of humor of the Commoners is roused a bit by the fact that Mr. Munson was one of the political prisoners during the war and, when he reported for duty, he had learned the poultry business while in charge of the chicken farm at Leavenworth for three years. Mr. Munson was one of the five founders, and organizer for the state of Oklahoma, of the Working-Class Union, one of the most interesting and at the same time one of the least known of our local lodge-size working-class movements. Organized in 1914 at VanBuren, Arkansas, it had 50,000 members by 1917. When the war came the organization opposed the entrance of the United States into the conflict. Mr. Munson, being an outstanding figure in the movement, was arrested in May, 1917, and sentenced under an law-a law that was not passed until June 1, 1927-the political prisoners during the war at Leavenworth for three years.

But, and this is the thing that the workers should keep everlastingly in mind, if they are to get the full productivity of their labor they must be thoroughly organized and be able to demand and get it because of their economic and political power. In the history of the world the worth-while things have come to the individuals, organizations and classes that had the power to command them. Instead of wasting time and energy trying to do the employers' job of getting waste elimination, greater individual production, etc., the labor leaders should devote every moment of their time and every ounce of their energy building up the power of the workers through the development of economic and political organizations that will "take all the business will bear" in the shape of wages. For a labor leader to concern himself seriously with ought else is treason to his constituents.

Chip-Will's-A-Widow

Beginning early in April and continuing far into the summer, this little bird may be heard any night, at frequent and regular intervals, uttering in a plaintive voice the notes that gave it a name: "Whip-poor-Will, Whip-poor-Will,"—sometimes, and I think more accurately, "Chip-Will's-a-widow."

When the nights are warm and the moon shines bright, it is pleasant to stroll along the cliff overlooking Mill Creek, looking for the little moorwills, and in the low lands across the stream, voicing the song that will continue until the morning star comes to send them to sleep: "Chip-Will's-a-widow, Chip-Will's-a-widow, — — — ." It carries the writer of this back to a time when a young man and his bride used to wander out along the railroad, and out upon a trestle that spanned a certain stream, and sit on the ends of the cross-ties and listen to the whip-poorwills for hours and hours—until their clothing was damp with dew, and then they shivered and snuggled up close for warmth.

But the young man went to the war. When he returned, his bride slept beneath the grass and wildflowers. And of evenings when the katydids droned in the trees and fireflies danced between the corn rows a whip-poorwill would come and chant above her grave: "Chip-Will's-a-widow, Chip-Will's-a-widow." —MARAT.

Garment Worker Explains Commonwealth Advantages

Among the subjects Commonwealth College presents to its students there is one of which I wish to say a few words; one which, in my opinion, deals more directly than any of the others with the question that troubles the working class as a whole, and me in particular; namely, Trade Unionism. It would be hara at me to say that any of the subjects in the curriculum are of no vital importance. On the contrary, I wish that our American workers could become acquainted with the doctrines of economic, political, and psychological, economics, law, etc. It probably would help them to understand their position in society as the producing class. But Trade Unionism deals directly with the bread and butter question.

"Trade Unionism," or "Labor History and problems," as it is sometimes called, is a compound subject in which various labor problems are discussed. The history of organized labor is, however, the topic to which our instructor devotes most of the time. By citing as an example the union to which I have belonged for more than ten years, the International Ladies Garment Workers, I shall endeavor to point out where the lack of knowledge on these subjects brought disaster to the workers.

During the World War, and for some time after the war, the I. L. G. W. U. was acknowledged to be one of the most radical or progressive unions in New York city. We had many strenuous fights with the employers. We gained the eight-hour day, a fair increase in wages, and better conditions generally. Our power grew continually. There were factions, of course, as there always have been. Disagreements sprung up between union officials. But consideration for the welfare of the organization was so strong that such disagreements were settled quickly.

These disagreements were repeated, however, and it became more and more often impossible to settle in a quiet manner, and open fights resulted. The rank and file did not know much about the cause of these disagreements, and none of the union officials ever published their sides of the question.

Books Review

The Thin Edge

An Interpretation of Recent American History

James C. Malin, New York.

The Century Co. $1.25

This is probably the best book of its kind yet written. One of its recommendations is its brevity and clarity. The designation of "its kind" is meant to include the characteristics, style and method as will permit its introduction into our big, ultra-conservative, trust-controlled universities.

In explaining the viewpoint of the book the author says: "We have too much history teaching which merely aims at having students memorize a mass of facts. While this is absolutely necessary, it is only the beginning. The student must be stimulated and aided in thinking through the historic problems presented."

The relation of economics to politics is treated in a realistic manner. "Economic determinism" is in fact the principal feature of the book. The extent to which historical works of this character gain circulation in our institutions of higher education would seem to constitute a pretty good gauge of our national possibilities in the direction of progressive political development.

W. C. B.
Society Notes

(Continued from Page 3.)

a dangerous radical, the Commoners think he will make a good chicken raiser.

Galen Bellman, of Wichita, Kans., hitch-hiked, in the early part of May, to spend the summer working at Commonwealth with the expectation of entering the college next October. Galen hopes to get a clearer idea of the meaning and possibilities of the labor movement.

George Carbow, twenty-three years old, in the oil fields of Texas, blew into Commonwealth a few days ago and announced that he would like the opportunity of the kind of education Commonwealth offers.

Commonwealth, as a rule, does not admit students except by formal application with references, etc. Director Zeuch cast an appraising eye over George’s stalwart, denim clad form, asked innocent looking questions, sounded him out on his education and experience and found even he wobbles in his consistency at times. As a matter of fact, we have only one Marxist on the teaching staff. That here and there are very few who subscribe to the Marxian approach to social problems has become a dangerous insinuation. Anarchism is an insult.

But how many really know the difference between all these “isms”? How many are trying to find out? If the great mass could know the shades of meaning of all these “isms,” and which of them are but a striving for a better human society to live in; they would soon realize how foolish it is to quarrel between themselves. The students of Labor History at Commonwealth College are discussing these differences and in each discussion I feel as though some clouds that have gathered before a storm have been dissipated and it is getting clearer.

I wonder how soon will our readers realize the great need of education for the working class?

IDA MINDLIN.

Garment Worker Explains

(Continued from Page 3.)

the question and terrible chaos resulted from the lack of knowledge. We all felt that something was wrong. Both sides seemed wrong and right at about the same time. We had to decide quickly on which side to be; for there is no such thing as being neutral, lest one gets kicked from both sides. But how can one decide blindly?

The majority of our members decided quickly, and the union split. Both sides have great masses of followers; blind followers, I must say. For, although I speak my own ideas and feelings, it is. after all, the voice of my comrades. For, although I speak my own ideas and experience.

At present, the fight is not with the employers for better conditions. It is a fight between the left and right wings. It is a test of power to decide what group of “leaders” shall rule. The economic purpose of the union is long forgotten. Socialism, that was once such a glorious term, has become a curse word. Communism is looked at with suspicion because it is thought to mean violence and chaos. Anarchism is an insult.

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IDA MINDLIN.

GOOD AND WELFARE

The Last Order of Business

By NAZARETH DAWN

Our Marxian Monastery.

In glancing through the recent correspondence I happened upon a letter from Charles H. Kerr of Chicago in which he says, “I have subscribed to the Commonwealth College Fortnightly, and am fascinated with what it tells of your Marxian monastery.”

If Mr. Kerr ever gets down this way, which he says he hopes to do some day, I am afraid that he is doomed to a disappointment. Commonwealth, instead of being a “Marxian” monastery, is just an experimental educational project for workers. As a matter of fact, we have only one Marxist on the teaching staff. That here and there are very few who subscribe to the Marxian approach to social problems has become a dangerous insinuation. Communism is an insult. As a matter of fact, Commonwealth would like to get a real, live, scholarly Communist who is a thorough Marxist to subscribe to the Marxian approach to social problems has become a dangerous insinuation. Communism is an insult. As a matter of fact, Commonwealth would like to get a real, live, scholarly Communist who is a thorough Marxist to subscribe to the Marxian approach to social problems has become a dangerous insinuation. Communism is an insult.