COLLEGE ASSOCIATION PLANS FOR FUTURE

Supplementary Scholarships Proposed to Save ' roaming of Maintenance

From a mere group of liberty seeking enthusiasts with less than one dollar in their community treasury to a firmly established educational institution with $50,000 capital equipment, and one that is ninety per cent self-sustaining, in less than four years, is the wonderful story revealed by the books of Commonwealth College Association. When one considers that this advancement has been accomplished by an organization dependent on the labor of its own members, and that it has always been less than fifty per cent efficient in man power, is it indeed a record almost too wonderful to be credible.

One thing is certain: Commonwealth has definitely passed the empirical stage in economic development and management. It is a "going concern" the continued existence of which is no longer a matter of speculation.

Nothing proves a theory false or true like working with it for a while. The Commonwealth theory that $100,000 invested in capital equipment and worked by the faculty and one hundred students would guarantee a self-maintaining college for workers has now, through experience and experimentation, passed into the realm of known fact. For if any economic unit can reach ninety per cent self-maintenance when but fifty per cent completed and fifty per cent manned it is a safe bet that it can be made more than self-maintaining and show a balance when it is one hundred per cent completed and one hundred per cent manned.

From an economic standpoint, two things are necessary in order to reach the second establishment goal: Commonwealth is a school where one hundred working students can obtain a college education:

1. The Completion of the unit. This will require $50,000 from our friends and well wishers. This will enable us to complete the farming equipment, add needed livestock, build a hydro-electric plant sufficient for lighting and power, improve and enlarge the dormitories and the

COMMONERS' LIBRARY

Famous Bookman Declares Volumes Can Not Be Duplicated in America

When it is claimed that the Commonwealth Library is the best in the South it is not meant that the building is the best, or that the volumes are the best bound, or even that the shelf arrangement is modern and the librarian is less stupid than the average. Far from it. The building is a temporary affair but little better than a rough, pine box. Many of the books are soiled and torn; and very few of them are new, in the sense of having come direct from the publisher or the bookstore. Shelf room is woefully inadequate. The librarian is conspicuous by his absence; for in the rush of crop season with a reduced crew there is no time to be spared for book-herding.

Commonwealth library has been accounted the best in the South because it is so comprehensive or all-inclusive.

Of the five thousand volumes that sag the shelves and pyramid the tables of Commonwealth Library, all but an infinitesimal number are donations from friends. When one un

VISITORS SWAMP COMMONWEALTH

Sightseers and Investigators Tax Abilities of Commoners to Entertain

Because there has been no attempt at registration, it is impossible to say with any degree of certainty how many persons have visited Commonwealth this summer. The number must be several hundred. Sundays, rain or shine, are "Visitor's Days." So much so that we have seriously thought of electing an official "Greeter" to meet the strings of automobiles and pilot the occupants about the campus and explain to them the different points of interest.

ARKANSAWYER PANS SHIFTLESS PAUPERS

Correspondent Condemns Fortnightly for Publishing Facts About Commonwealth

"One big trouble with Arkansas is that a horde of shiftless paupers, too lazy and inefficient to exist where the rigors of climate compels them to wear clothes and feed their 'criters,' have come down here, where they can live so easy, and they expect the 'natives' to fall down and worship them. Then, when they find that they must work and manage just like they would have to do elsewhere, they curse Arkansas."

"This quotation from a letter to the editor of Fortnightly taking him to task for writing flowery accounts of Arkansas in general and Commonwealth in particular that are alleged to be likely to attract undesirable immigration quite well expresses the opinion old-time Arkansawyers often hold of those who come here from other parts.

While it is unjust to say that all immigrants are shiftless paupers incapable of maintaining themselves decently anywhere, it is a fact that many people come to Arkansas laboring under the illusion that it is a sort of "Lazy man's paradise." Land is cheap, and of average productivity. The climate is mild and healthful. Many portions of the

YOUNG SOAP-BOXER THANKS DR. ZEUCH

Art of Debate Developed at Workers' School Aids Young Orator

"Last night I was speaking to some Negro workmen. When it came to answering questions, I had to marshal all the oratorical tricks that I learned at Commonwealth College. It is not so hard to speak now. My throat doesn't get sore on the box as it used to when making a long speech." Thus sayeth Fritz Hocevar in a letter to Dr. Zeuch recently.

Fritz, it will be remembered, was mentioned in the Fortnightly for August 1st as having produced a
Commonwealth College Fortnightly

Published twice a month at Mena, Arkansas, by Commonwealth College, a school for self-maintaining, non-propaganda education for workers. Subscription, one dollar a year. Entered as second class matter, January 30, 1926, at the post office at Mena, Arkansas, under the Act of August 21, 1912.

Signed articles express only individual opinion.

Editors, particularly of labor and farmer papers, are welcome to make free use of material appearing in these columns. A line crediting the Commonwealth college Fortnightly will be appreciated.

Vol. III, No. 18 September 15, 1927

WHAT IS COMMONWEALTH COLLEGE?

Commonwealth was organized in 1923 to provide education for workers on a self-supporting basis.

Commonwealth is located in the Ouachita Mountains near Mena, Ark., where it operates an agricultural campus and other industries by means of four hours daily labor from its students and teachers.

Commonwealth seeks to develop in young men and women of the working class the capacity to serve the labor movement.

Commonwealth is a non-sectarian, non-propaganda institution. It sponsors no particular religious, political, or economic doctrine. It has been called experimental and a front of reconstruction. It is the hope of adjusting or solving personal and social problems.

Commonwealth is the only institution for higher education where both teachers and students earn their maintenance by part-time labor while engaged in academic work.

Shiftless Paupers

It is to the challenging task of seeking a more satisfactory approach to higher education that Commonwealth gives its energies. It is significant that although volumes have been written pointing out the deficiencies in modern higher education, most of these volumes have eventually added only to the general feeling that nothing is to be said about it.

This has not been the attitude of those who are building Commonwealth. To analyze and admit defects, and at the same time to accept these defects as inevitable, is not a part of the scientific procedure; for to see defects and accept them is to grow old and decay; to understand defects and to use this knowledge as a means of reconstruction is to open up the road to progress.

This has been the viewpoint of Commoners during their four years of constructive effort. It is interesting to realize that men high in academic circles now are studying this new approach, and that many have indicated their feeling that a vital contribution has already been made.

Just what has been done, why, and, how, can best be shown by discussing the development of Commonwealth under the five categories into which the weaknesses of present day education have been divided, and by showing that, point by point, how Commonwealth is building its life to counteract what seem to be the elements of decay in modern higher education.

Economic: Commonwealth is not parasitic; its source of income is derived from the activities of the educational community functioning as an integral part of general economic life. This is possible because each instructor and student spends twenty hours a week in agricultural, industrial, or domestic work. In about four years, with the economic unit and man power only 50% completed the college has reached approximately 90% self-sufficiency. The goal of complete self-maintenance is yet to be realized, but the method has been found sound, and success seems to be but a matter of development.

Nor does Commonwealth seek endowment, because this implies a controlling of production capital not to be used by the owners, thus enabling the owners to function only because of the economic activities of others. Money which most colleges would use as endowment, Commonwealth invests in capital equipment to be operated by its faculty and student body.

Shiftless Paupers (Continued from Page 1)

State—one of which is the Ouachita mountain region wherein is located Commonwealth College—are so sparsely settled that there is almost unlimited pastureage for cattle and hogs and other "critters." The "Natives," who are often referred to with sneers by the above-mentioned "shiftless paupers," are good neighbors, quite up to the American average of intelligence; their greatest fault being a childlike credulity which causes them to over-estimate the worth of anyone who comes among them wearing good clothes and using a vocabulary containing words which are not well understood but which are conceived to be an indication of higher education.

In reality, to live in Arkansas one must work quite as hard as in any other country. Those who have been deceived on this score by the easy-


two-hour a week trying to earn board and room at jobs in which in many instances cut into hours of class and study, the student at Commonwealth receives his board, room, and laundry for twenty hours of work, so organized that his work in no way conflicts with study, class work, or group life.

II. Educationally: (A) The teachers and students at Commonwealth are free to approach problems experimentally and fearlessly because there is no sustaining group with an economic, religious, social, or political bias to withdraw support if heresy is discovered. The host of teachers and students in standard colleges who lose caste and jobs each year because they dare to dissent from the herd opinion, are perhaps best in a position to evaluate this freedom.

Moreover, Commonwealth is not a part of the educational hierarchy and is not compelled to cramp its life to fit the requirements of rigid accrediting associations. Yet some of its students have had their work at Commonwealth accepted in the largest accredited Universities.

Moreover the criterion of work is set within the faculty. Although there are enough degrees including Ph. D's to go around almost twice, all teachers are instructors, and each is free to develop that technique which is best adapted to his personality, the requirements of the subject, and the needs of the students. Classes are small, contacts are intimate, and red tape is held to a minimum. Rational adjustments to life situations occupy the center of the academic stage.

(B) The teachers are not employees, but a guild of educators, paying themselves no salaries, but receiving each his maintenance from the common wealth.

(C) Commonwealth does not give credits nor grant degrees, although it meets all the qualifications of a degree granting institution. Thus the student has no stimulus other than an eager intellectual curiosity, for no haphazard collecting of credits will gain a reward of intrinsic economic or social value. This makes it necessary for the student to be interested in his own education, for
he knows that every thing depends upon his own interest, energy, initiative, and application.

III. Community Life: Life here is not artificial. There are no gorgeous frat houses where students acquire habits of waste. Organized and semi-organized commercialized amusements, and their various complications and problems do not exist.

The entire campus consists of a group of frame buildings beautifully situated on a bluff overlooking a mountain-encircled valley. The appearance is that of a small community, and the new comer often asks where the college is. A college does not consist of buildings; it consists in the educational association of teachers and students. This association is Commonwealth College, and classes are held wherever this association is most natural and inspiring.

A few hours of work each day provides a normal outlet for energy, builds health, and adds another dimension to life. The student does not feed on commercialized amusement, but creates his own avocation according to his own taste. Swimming, hiking, nature study, discussion around the fire place, open forums, reading, dances, home talent plays, community singings, creative construction of beautiful things, and music appreciation add a type of variety which can be incorporated by the student into his own community life after he leaves college.

IV. Neighborhood Relations: Commonwealth is a functioning part of its neighborhood. Community dances, athletic events, and socials are well attended that there is scarcely room for every one. Last Fourth of July when the Commeners had had time to tell perhaps a dozen people of a new colony, the place was packed. The open air dancing was a great success, and the return and bringing of friends.

In this integration with the neighborhood life which makes it unlikely that a Commonwealth student will develop collegiate snobishness. Moreover the student, during his five months of summer work, often in a large city, keeps vital contact with reality. Attending Commonwealth is certainly not entering a mystery, nor “taking a glorious four year vacation.”

V. Expansion Limits: Caesar was able to cross the Rhine because he built his own bridge as he went. A less able general would have been

Shiftless Paupers

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going air of those who have learned the secret of existence in the South advertise their lack of common sense by blaming the city, the manufacturers, the marketing facilities, and any other thing that comes into their minds; — except that they never by any chance blame their own stupidity.

That which our correspondent alleges to be the big trouble with Arkansas would, if permitted, very soon become the ruination of Commonwealth. More often than might be supposed we get letters from people wanting to come here and enter the “colony” because they believe it to be a place where they can piddle around, pump a few pails of water, split a few armloads of kindling wood, snap a few beans for canning, lie abed until the middle of the forenoon, spend the evenings eating watermelons and dancing, and get by without having to “engage in killing toil for the profit of some grasping capitalist.” All such applicants are turned down whenever detected.

It is true that Fortnightly has from time to time published some rather glowing accounts of our splendid climate, our beautiful scenery, our outdoor existence, our other ultra-desirable features of Commonwealth; and not one word of what we have published has been untrue or even exaggerated. But we have never represented this educational institution as a “colony” wherein all sorts of freaks and misfits have been tolerated.

Without going you can get nowhere.—Chinese Proverb.

Swamp Commonwealth

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As it is, most any one who happens to be idle for the time is impressed for this duty.

In addition to the growing crowds of interested neighbors, and the numerous tourists who make the side trip from Mena, there has been a goodly number who came from distant parts for the express purpose of getting acquainted with a Workers’ School. Such persons, of course, generally stay from one to five weeks. And they have come in such numbers that our commodious “Guest House” has at times been too small to hold them and the overflow had to be assigned sleeping quarters among the cottages of the group members and the half vacant dormitories.

We like this. We want people to come and learn first hand what we have. Our only regret is that connection that our facilities for entertainment are so crude and inadequate. Next year, as a matter of natural growth if for no other reason, we will be in better position to entertain. Next year we expect the number of visitors to be greatly augmented; for all those who have not visited the Commonwealth have enthusiastically accepted invitations to return and bring their friends.

Towers are measured by their shadows and great men by their calamitarians.—Chinese Proverb.

ed in education, and are willing to work equal hours with the students, for the privilege of imagination and co-operative thinking. Should a surplus ever accrue above a reasonable allowance for research and scholarships the economic activities would be cut down to the minimum.

Again many communities have developed and declined where the primary aim was the economic gain of the institution. Commonwealth has a purpose which eclipses economic gain, and this purpose has proved sufficient to keep economic activities in a subordinate position.

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Thanks, Dr. Zeuch

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work of fiction, "Johnny Perkins," which he began while at school here—and upon which he received much coaching from Commonwealth instructors. Now it seems that he is putting to use the instruction in public speaking and debating which he received from Dr. Zeuch.

Nor does it appear that training under Zeuch in any degree modified Fritz' personal views. Zeuch is anything but a Communist, and can hardly be called a "radical" of any sort. Fritz is an American Communist who glorifies in his dogmas; but he says:

"It is not such a hard task any more to convince the Comrades that I am not becoming conservative. Most of them were afraid such would be the result of a year's study at Commonwealth College. They are surprised, and look upon Commonwealth as in a far different light than formerly."

A better testimonial to the practicability or at least possibility of non-propaganda education could hardly be penned.

Plans for Future

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library, and establish two small shops wherein repairs can be made and certain standard articles can be produced. With such a sum, Commonwealth, by supplying the labor, and by supplying much of the materials from its own forests, can do what most colleges would require five times as much cash to do.

(2) Until our friends have made it possible to complete the economic unit, the ten per cent difference between existing conditions and total self-sufficiency—a difference which will naturally decrease as the unit nears completion—must be supplied from sources outside the group members and students.

Many colleges would meet this situation by raising the tuition from $100 to $110 a year, and the students who couldn't pay could stay at home. Other colleges would meet the situation by accepting large endowments.

Commonwealth does not want endowments. And Commonwealth students must save the present $100 tuition, plus money for books, clothing, and incidentals from their earnings in industry. An extra $50 would eliminate most of the working students, as only a few command sufficiently high wages to meet such an increase.

The solution seems therefore to lie in the establishment of supplementary scholarships—each of $50, and one for each student—to be subscribed by friends of workers' education. Thus, the student supplies $100, the friend of workers' education supplies $50, the industrial organization of Commonwealth supplies the equivalent of $300, and the teachers donate their services.

Surely, no friend of workers' education will hesitate to be responsible for at least one such scholarship or at least part of one if his means are limited. Every $10 will serve as the supplementary scholarship of a student for almost six weeks, and $25 will serve for half a year. Nor will these supplementary scholarships remain a permanent necessity. They will decrease from year to year as the economic unit approaches the normal of economic-sufficiency, until they can be dispensed with—or the money can be used to pay the $100 a year tuition of workers who desire to become students but can not themselves supply the needed funds.

Best in South

[continued from Page 1.]

Understands that Commonwealth counts its friends among all classes and conditions of the people, and that these friends are generally enthusiastic supporters of "isms" and dogmas and religions and theories and shades of theory almost as varied as the friends are numerous, and that each one sends along as many different books as he can find to support his particular hobby, one can understand that our library must be comprehensive, and can guess that it probably contains many volumes that are out of print and that are not to be found in libraries under the control of persons, groups, or classes who seek to direct public reading along certain channels and, as far as possible, prevent reading along other channels.

When Charles H. Kerr, of the book publishing firm of Charles H. Kerr and Company, Chicago, was here he spent the major portion of his three weeks vacation poring over rare volumes which he declared could not be found elsewhere in America. In view of the fact that for thirty-one years it has been the business of Mr. Kerr to read rare books, and to translate rare books from foreign languages, we feel justified in quoting him in support of our contention that Commonwealth library is the best in the South.

It is with ideas as with pieces of money, those of the least value generally circulate the most.—Punch.

Shiftless Paupers

[continued from Page 3.]

fits may foregather and make each other miserable by long winded pseudo - philosophical arguments while waiting for the dinner bell to call them to meals which they have not helped to provide. And right now we want it distinctly understood that, economically, Commonwealth is very much as "Commonwealth of Toil," and that in order to remain here and enjoy such bennings as we have it is necessary to work, and work hard;—and we do not care to undertake the support of any considerable number of drones. Commonwealth has only just now emerged from the formative stage. Everything is crude. Nothing is finished. We need help. We need muscle power. We will welcome those who can and will give us that help. In return, we will guarantee to all such persons that which we have already attained for ourselves: freedom of thought, freedom of speech, freedom of action—if such action is not materially harmful to the community; and all this in a community wherein social inequality is not permitted to exist, a community in which the rights and privileges and idiosyncrasies of each individual are scrupulously respected.

Yes indeed, come to Arkansas. Come to Commonwealth. But please do not come filled with the idea that you will be carried around on a chip and fed with a golden spoon. —MARAT.

Society Notes

Our Absent Ones are very modern in one thing at least: they do not write home very often. In fact, most of them do not write at all—and that notwithstanding the fact that practically every one made solemn promises to write regularly for publication in the Fortnightly. In roundabout ways Fortnightly has had news from some but if they are too careless to write to the editor, the editor will retaliate by keeping their names out of the paper.

As we must render account of every idle word, so must we likewise of our idle silence.—Ambrose.

Double ignorance is where a man is ignorant that he is ignorant.—Plato.

Keep cool and you command everybody.—St. Just.