EMPLOYMENT “LUCK” REVEALS CONDITIONS

The poor luck of the Commoners in getting jobs this summer shows the general business depression prevailing in the United States.

In order to earn expenses and tuition for the coming school year, our students have scattered to all parts of the country, from California to New York and from Minnesota to Texas. Some have been unable to find employment at all, and those who have are “pulling through by the skin of their teeth.”

Ch. Kramarsky, a member of the International Pocketbook Workers Union of New York City, writes: “I found a great unemployment in this city—particularly in my trade. One of the greatest difficulties for me now is to get a job.”

Ubaldo Rich, an active member of the United Mine Workers of America, has not even tried to get work in the mines, knowing its hopelessness. “I have been very unfortunate in finding a job,” he writes. “It seems to me that wherever I go the factory shuts down. In many factories they have a sign nailed on the gate which says: NOTICE—NO HELP WANTED—KEEP OUT.”

Louie Mosher, of Spadra, Arkansas, has still not found work. “If steamboats were selling at two for a quarter,” he writes, “I couldn’t buy the exhaust from one.”

Lucien and Raymond Koch, both carpenters in Cincinnati, hint at conditions there. “We have only recently gone to work for outside builders. Wages as compared with those of New York City are poor and the mode of travel difficult. The usual working day is nine hours. Employers in Cincinnati seem to wilfully ignore the eight-hour rule.”

George Curbo, a farm boy from Texas, has drifted to Owosso, Michigan, where he is working nights in an automobile part foundry. It was a month after he left Commonwealth before he found a single day’s work.

Another farmer, Herman Erickson, [Continued on Page Three.]

PLEDGES FOR THE FORTNIGHT.

O. O. Wagner, Millertown, Pa.
Mr. and Mrs. J. Henry Scattersgood, Philadelphia, Pa.
A. S. Oko, Cincinnati, Ohio.

EN ROUTE

Extracts from the Diary of

THE CUNNINGHAMS

June 25 to July 2—Cincinnati.

We hitched into Cincinnati Monday morning, and began the business of interesting persons in Commonwealth. We found, at once, Dr. Ellery F. Reed, director of the Helen S. Toddsteine Foundation, an old friend of Zuech’s and his schoolmate in three different colleges and universities. He helped us a great deal in meeting people and getting around in the city. The following day we saw Dorothy K. Minster, already on the list of pledges, and got her advice and help in our work.

On this day it began to rain, and continued in fitful but thorough showers during our stay in Cincinnati. Hence, we were continually dashing along just ahead or behind, and once or twice quite in the middle of an Ohio thunder shower. At the rather threatening end of such a day, we went to call on Mary D. Brite, who is a member of the Commonwealth Advisory Board—a decisive lady with a militant interest in all things liberal and progressive. For those few hours we quite forgot the weather.

On the 27th we dined with the Reeds, and at their home later that evening, we talked Commonwealth and the world in general with an interesting group of social workers and college professors.

On the following Saturday we had dinner with Miss Whitney of the Consumers’ League, and talked with more social workers and another college professor.

Dr. Francis Byrd of the School of Engineering at Cincinnati University, mo­

tored Bill to his class on Labor the following Monday morning, where Bill lec.

[Continued on Page Three]

PROPOSES REGIONAL WORKERS COLLEGES

Director of Commonwealth Suggests Plan for Seven Sectional Colleges for Workers.

In an article just released to the labor press Dr. Zuech proposes the establishment of seven regional resident colleges for workers as an educational program for the organized farmer and labor movements for the next generation.

“During the past ten years,” he writes, “there has been a growing awareness on the part of all organized workers of the need of workers’ education. There has been much pioneering and experimenting with local evening classes, summer labor colleges, summer labor conferences, and resident labor colleges. It is rare indeed that a state or national labor convention, a co-operative congress, or an organized farmers convention is held, without considerable discussion of the need of education for their respective groups. It is high time that a constructive program for the future development of workers’ education be created.”

Dr. Zuech then points out the increasing costs of higher education and the greater difficulties that working boys and girls face in getting a higher education. “The educators and labor leaders,” he continues, “who have been active in developing workers’ education have seen the need of trained workers for the various branches of the labor movement. There is a growing conviction, however, that workers’ education must not only turn out technically trained persons for the labor movement but must offer the opportunity for a general higher education for young workers.”

Dr. Zuech then proposes that the territory of the United States be divided into seven logical districts and that all groups of organized workers in each district cooperate to establish a resident workers’ college for that district. These districts he calls Eastern, Central, Southern, Northwest, Southwest, Mountain, and Pacific. The Pacific district, for example, includes the states of Washington, Idaho, Oregon, Nevada and California.
This Devastating Surplus

By William Edward Zeuch.

Ever since power driven machinery was introduced into the processes of production the industrial world has suffered periodically from a congestion of goods. It has not been that there was at any time too much goods for human consumption but rather that the goods, by reason of ownership, were in the hands of people who could neither consume them nor use them profitably in further production. Power to produce goods abundantly had outstripped our ability to devise a wise and equitable distribution. The surplus of goods flowing from a constantly improving technique of production has now led to an almost chronic congestion of commodities.

With almost incredible folly, some statesmen, economists and labor leaders have told us that the cure for this faulty distribution is a greater individual productive efficiency. They have told the workers and farmers that the way to get more is to produce more.

There have always been a few who have seen the error in such advice. Among the economists, Malthus was one of the first to see that the fault was in our system of distribution, and to propose a remedy. He was followed by Marx, who likewise saw the cause and proposed a solution. Today the situation has become so critical and the cause so obvious that a larger body of students have been brought to propose remedies.

Let us consider briefly these analyses and the remedies offered.

Malthus, over a century ago, found the cause of periodic overproduction in the accumulation of business profits, in the form of surplus goods in the hands of business men. Faster than they could be re-employed profitably in further production. He proposed that this congestion of surplus goods be done away with by the expenditure of the accumulation of non-productive labor. He thought that it would be possible to do away with the periodic congestion of surplus goods if the manufacturers and business men would use their profits to employ teachers, artists, thinkers, engineers, and to build roads, public buildings, etc. The employment of such non-productive workers and the construction of non-profitable public works would absorb the surplus goods and employ the surplus workers that could not be used at a profit in industry. In other words, the employment of non-productive workers would constantly absorb the excess profits of the productive workers and all would be well.

Marx, almost sixty years ago, found the cause of overproduction, as did Malthus, in the accumulating profits in the form of goods left in the hands of capitalists, which they could not reinvest profitably. Instead, however, of advocating like Malthus, that the surplus be absorbed by the employment of non-productive workers, he suggested that the capitalist be eliminated and that all the surplus goods flow back to the workers in the form of wages. If this were done, Marx held, there could be no periodic congestion of surplus goods with all its attendant evils. Where Malthus called for wise administration of the surplus by the capitalists to insure their own survival, Marx called for the destruction of the capitalists and capitalism by doing away with the accumulation by destroying the profit system which made the accumulation possible.

Neither Malthus nor Marx were heeded and we have the same old problem of the surplus with us today. But most of the progressive moderns are proposing the absorption of the surplus and the restriction of capitalism by a shortening of the work day, the employment of the unemployed, and the steady increase of wages so as to leave no unnecessary accumulating surplus in the hands of capitalists. "Let the managers of industry," they say, "take enough out of the product of industry to replace and improve machinery, to make the necessary extensions of plant and to meet their own legitimate needs. But turn all the balance back to society in the form of a complete employment of labor, shorter and shorter working days, with a wage that permits a high standard of well-being."

This program of the moderns is endorsed by farsighted business men, liberal economists, social workers and progressive labor leaders. The history of the next generation will be the story of the attempts of the progressive forces to enact legislation to assure the distribution of the surplus in accordance with this formula.

Mildred and Selma Chadwick left for St. Louis, where Mildred will enter a hospital to take the nurses training course. Selma will go on to New York to resume her work in Bellevue Hospital.
EN ROUTE

[Continued from Page One.]

tered on our experiment in workers' education.

Our last afternoon and evening in this city were spent on a high hill overlooking the red roofs of Cincinnati and nearby Kentucky, at the beautiful home of Mr. and Mrs. Minster. In the afternoon, we played tennis with Phil Ziegler, who is editor of the Railway Clerk; Herbert Strube (a former Commonwealth student) and his wife; the Minsters and Dr. Herbert Bigelow, the brilliant and influential liberal pastor of the People's Church. After a buffet supper, we met Bigelow's friends who had helped him to establish the Bigelow Teaching Foundation at Brookwood Labor College, and who now came to hear Bigelow's report after his first week at Brookwood. In the discussion which followed Bigelow's talk, Commonwealth and Brookwood were compared from every angle, and their similarities and differences brought out. Through this discussion, Mr. A. S. Oko, librarian of the Hebrew Union College, became interested in Commonwealth and promised to send the school a check, as had Mr. Edgar Friedlander and Alvin Lehman earlier in the week.

July 9 to 13—Philadelphia

Our stay in Philadelphia was a succession of rain and heat waves, but Mr. and Mrs. Charles Lawrence, whose guests we were, made us so comfortable that we managed to ignore the inhospitable weather gods, for the most part.

One of the most appreciative audiences we have talked to proved to be the Young People's Socialist League, whose members asked innumerable questions and passed a resolution "approving officially of Commonwealth College, and promising financial support. We went also to the regular meeting of the Socialists, and while the members who did attend were interested in our project, the heat kept many of them from the meeting.

We met Miss Christenson of the Women's Trade Union League, and Israel Mufson of the Philadelphia Labor College, whose work, after all, is closely akin to that of Commonwealth.

On Friday, the 13th, we saw J. Henry Scattergood, who sent the college a check toward the maintenance fund, and then had lunch with Francis F. Kane, an interesting and social-minded lawyer.

July 17 to 18—Paterson

We left Ben Franklin's town behind and reached Paterson, New Jersey and the home of Pete and Mildred (Koch) Hoeclemaker, at 10 in the evening. Former Commoners are always the brightest spots on our trip, because they make us think of home. We talked until 1 o'clock in the morning, slept unbelievably late the next morning, and after a Dutch breakfast, embarked toward the New York skyline.

EMPLOYMENT "LUCK"

REVEALS CONDITIONS

(Continued from Page One)

from Lancaster, Minnesota, has been working with a threshing outfit about eighteen miles outside of Oklahoma City. He writes, "I worked for a dollar a day before harvest. They pay very poor wages in this country. But now I find myself getting rich overnight at the rate of three dollars a day. I will follow the harvest into North Dakota and then hitch-hike back to Arkansas."

Harry I. Cohen, a member of the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks, and also a printer, has wandered far from his trades. He is in Buffalo, trying to eke out an existence by selling Realsilk Hose.

Ross Brown drove his motorcycle from St. Louis to New York City looking for work, and being unsuccessful, sold the cycle and shipped out on board a steamer to California, via the Panama Canal. So one of the Commoners is "scrubbing decks."

Galen Bellman has found work in a foundry in Houston, Texas, and is attending the labor seminar conducted by the industrial department of the Y. W. C. A. And we hear indirectly that Al and Trixie Kruger have also gone to work—with their father, who is a plumbing contractor. Fathers with "businesses" do come in handy sometimes.

Nell Toble has found work at the Del Otero Hotel, Spring Park, Minnesota, where she is "dolled in a black uniform with white head band and white collars and cuffs," waiting on table.

These glimpses are representative of the luck of our students this summer.

SOCIETY NOTES

Mr. Louis Bergold of Oregon, a horticulturist who was associated with Luther Burbank for fifteen years, is now visiting Commonwealth. Of course, all visitors at Commonwealth are working guests, so Mr. Bergold has been putting in his time trimming up the shrubbery, doing the summer pruning in the peach and apple orchards, and in various other ways giving us of his knowledge and experience. When a specialist arrives every Commoner is a student.

The efficiency of the Post Office Department is constantly brought to the attention of Commonwealth. We get letters addressed to us under all sorts of names. "The Pay-as-you-go College," "The Overall College," "The Unique Labor College," are some of the queerly addressed letters that the Post Office Department drops into our box. And they all belong to us. Most recently a worker in Pennsylvania addressed a letter to "Poor Man's University, State of Arkansas" and in schedule time it arrived without even a scratch of those hieroglyphics or legends that indicate doubt on the part of postal officials.

Mrs. C. K. McKethan, a prospective student from Shreveport, Louisiana, drove up over the week end a couple weeks ago to get a first hand impression of our rustic plant and our rural simplicity. Whether the conventionalized urbanite survives the shock of living conditions in a pioneer educational venture remains to be seen.

Potato digging has come and gone again. The crop was good and the winter supply has been housed away under the "Castle." The Commoners surveyed the crop reports last February and de-

WILL YOU ENROLL YOURSELF AS ONE OF THE HUNDRED WHOSE CONTRIBUTIONS WILL MAKE THE CONTINUATION OF COMMONWEALTH POSSIBLE?

If so fill out and mail this blank.

I hereby enclose $_______ for the year 1928 and pledge $_______ annually for 1929 and 1930.

NAME ___________________________

ADDRESS ________________________

[Continued on Page Four.]
GOOD and WELFARE
The Last Order of Business
By NAZARETH DAWN

Unburdening.
Each spring and autumn these United States are webbed by the trails of outgoing and incoming Commoners as they thread the highways that radiate from our mountain valley. From letters of those en route and from tales of the road as they are told around the glowing fireplaces of a chill evening there is one theme that recurs again and again, the theme of the stranger unburdening his soul.

A letter from a fellow Commoner who traversed the Gulf states and the Atlantic seaboard states on his way home to New York City retells the tale. He writes:

"I got some profound insights into fundamental human nature, thanks to man's incurable desire to unburden himself. The people I rode with were good Catholics, every man Jack of them. Their confessions were uninhibited by conventional niceties; therefore, perhaps, more frank than even His Catholic Holiness is wont to hear.

"It struck me for the first time how universal is the tendency to get things off our chest. . . . Every driver who gave me a lift seemed to be a penitent in search of a confessor. If I rode with him for any distance he was bound eventually to perform some self-analysis. . . . I suppose that he took courage from the fact that I was, after all, a stranger; and as such like a ship passing in the night, never to be met with again. . . . It was all so pathetic. He was as ashamed of his spiritual nakedness as a bride on her first night, and as fearful that I might be moved to laughter. How terrible laughter can be!

"I probably learned more about him than his most intimate friend has gleaned from a lifetime's friendship. With a friend, no matter how he fires our confidence, we must always be circumspect: we never know when he will turn enemy. But we can throw caution to the winds in the presence of a stranger for doubtless we shall see him nevermore. . . .

"The transformation is marvelous to behold. Picture an aemetic, colorless looking preacher with a voice as gentle and soothing as a midsummer breeze and eyes that say Faith, Hope, and Charity—picture such a fellow talking of clandes­time sexual conquests in a vocabulary that would make a Bowery bum turn green with envy. And I thought Elmer Gantry preposterous.

"I used to think, and say, that civilization has clocked our true personalities in semblances, has made us all past masters at bluff and bluster, at hypocracies big and little. But this sentiment was merely an emotional conviction of mine—only now do I realize its profundity."

Everybody, so it seems, is constantly in search of a confessor. The passing stranger fills that need today with countless thousands. Those traveling persons who are possessed of confiding countenances know how universal is the desire to unburden. On steamships, on railroads, in hotel lobbies they are cornered to listen to some overburdened agonizing soul pour out its sins and woes. The great mass needs the understanding heart, the father confessor.

Historically, the Catholic Church from her vast experience sensed the need and provided the confessor. Then, sad to relate, she permitted her material desires to corrupt this great spiritual function. The Protestants went directly to God with the confessional prayer. The great wanting of faith has again brought about the need of the earthly confessor. Priests and preachers ought to evolve into a secular group to meet this great emotional need. At present the cloth is for the most part un夠ted for the work. Too many clerics are themselves in need of unburdening. Then, too, they lack the training.

This great human need should not be left to chance, to sympathetic strangers: yea, even to the ministrations of callow hitch-hiking Commoners.

SOCIETY NOTES

(Continued from Page Three.)

Miss Mary Erma Wilson, teacher of music of Pleasant Lake, Indiana, spent several weeks with the Commoners recently. Miss Wilson has been interested in Commonwealth for a number of years so decided to take the time to become better acquainted with the resident group. She was so impressed with the location and the work done that she has decided to spend a year with the Commoners if she can shake herself loose from other engagements.

Mr. and Mrs. Sprague, chautauqua artists whose home is a farm near Charles Finger at Fayetteville, were visitors at Commonwealth the last of July. The Spragues heard much about Commonwealth so drove down to give us the once over. They hope to be able to return when school is in session to stay some time and to get a more intimate knowledge of the personnel and operation of the school.

Thanks, Friends

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CAMPAIGN RESULTS

Pledges to Date.

(70 pledges have been acknowledged in this column in previous issues)

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