Eighth Birthday Featured by Talks on History, Criticism and Future of School

The eighth anniversary of Commonwealth was celebrated by teachers, students and friends on April 2, with a program of talks on the history, current criticism and future of the college.

Professor Goodhue described the pioneer hardships and personalities, traced the events of the early years and stated that plans were now under way to organize material for a history of Commonwealth.

David Kaplan announced himself the "jevil's advocate." He deployed the isolation and romanticism of Commoners and proposed that they get out and try to organize Arkansas farmers. He thought our isolation removed the incentive for hard study that comes from close contact with the competitive struggle.

"When Commonwealth was founded it was not on the basis of a blue print," Zeuch stated in his talk on the future of Commonwealth. "We worked out our problems experimentally as we went along. Many problems have been solved. Our form of organization,—delegated responsibility,—is successful. Student participation in the government of the school is working. Complete democracy for our faculty is achieved. We have yet to obtain complete self-sufficiency and one-hundred per cent efficiency in our industrial work."

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OUR SUMMER SESSION BEGINS ON JUNE 15

Courses in Labor Economics, Labor Journalism, Social Psychology, American History, Mathematics, Effective Writing, and Public Speaking will feature the ten-week summer session at Commonwealth which opens on June 15, and closes August 21.

Dr. Zeuch will handle the work in Labor and Economics for the last time before his European trip. Prof. F. M. Goodhue, as usual, will offer work in Mathematics, including a course in Statistics. Bill and Clarice Cunningham, former members of the Commonwealth teaching staff, will be in residence as instructors. Bill, an experienced teacher and journalist, will offer the course in Labor Journalism. Clarice will supervise the work in Effective Writing. Together they will conduct a seminar in The Short Story. Both are successful writers.

The summer session promises to be most interesting. A number of student applications for entrance have already come in.

STATEMENT

A somewhat strange notion has somewhat cotton farmers. W. E. Zeuch, former Commoner, writes from Paris, "I get the impression that you are retreating from Commonwealth and are giving over the institution to your children. Is my impression correct?" This is typical of many inquiries received.

Yet, I am not retiring from Commonwealth. I expect to return to Commonwealth in October, 1932, after a year abroad studying workers' education; providing, of course, that the Commoners will not retire me. When I return it will be as a Teacher and not as Director.

Yes, in a sense, I am turning the institution to my children. Yet, strictly speaking, no one can move me further from the truth. First, the community is not mine to turn over to anybody. Second, I have no children.

I am a man in a hurry. Kramsky and others mean that young men and women who have worked at Commonwealth are taking over "home places." That is true. The responsibility for, and welfare of, Commonwealth is passing to them in greater measure and the "old folks" are being gradually retired from administrative positions.

Personally, this transition gives me the greatest of pleasures. It marks the coming of age of our new and old community. What began as an experiment has emerged into a real and true social, educational, administrative, and complete support to the new Director. I of course I want to keep young associates who are capable to assume the administrative responsibilities at Commonwealth. Properties forbids that any permanent Director be made further больше of his "children."

ZEUCH TO RESEARCH ABROAD

For the first time in eight years W. E. Zeuch is to have the opportunity of a change from his duties at Commonwealth. His appointment to a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship, and the fact that the new director, Lucien Koch, and other Commoners, are here to carry on Commonwealth's administrative work, have made possible a change of scene for Zeuch.

The Guggenheim Fellowship was granted to assist Zeuch in making a study of resident workers' educational projects in western Europe. He will embark for Europe about September 15. Lucien Koch is expected to take over the duties of Director shortly before Zeuch's departure.

Zeuch will travel first to England, where he will study Ruskin College at Oxford. From England he will go to Belgium and then to Denmark. In Sweden he will study the frame mill at Torslunda and the Brannvik. About Christmas time he will arrive in Germany where he expects to remain five months visiting the numerous resident workers' colleges in that country. The remaining four months will be spent in France, Spain, Italy and Russia.

Zeuch's investigations will cover the origin, history, curriculum, government, sources of income, relation to organized labor, and educational ideals of the many resident workers' schools that he will visit.

THE ROBOT TO HIT SOUTHERN FARMERS

Ware and Harris Talk on Southern Agriculture and Soviet Farming During Visit Here

"Within three years seventy-five per cent of the poor Southern cotton farmers will have been displaced by the application of machinery to the growing of cotton," predicted Harold Ware and Lement Harris to Commoners recently. Ware and Harris, who are traveling west from the Carolinas, are making a survey of conditions among the poor farmers in the United States. They stopped at Commonwealth for four days and then left on April 5 for points south and west.

Ware and Harris were most instructive visitors. Both returned in December from Russia where they had been working and studying recent developments. They spoke before the general Commonwealth group meetings, at one on "Russia" and at the other two on "Agriculture in the South."

"Cotton planters cannot remain in the market on ten cent cotton," Ware told Commoners. "They can do only one thing and that is to increase their efficiency by introducing machinery and going in for large scale production. This is already being done and will soon be done to a greater extent, according to agricultural authorities. A cotton picking machine has been invented, although as yet the patents have been brought through. When this machine is utilized seventy-five per cent of tenant cotton farmers will be set adrift. There will be an "agricultural revolution" in the South."

Ware and Harris foresee that economic support will be cut from under a large portion of the Southern population. These drifters will then be added to the already large number of urban dependents. The visitors are seeking "a way out" based upon their experience with Russian "Collective"

(Continued on Page Four)

WATER SYSTEM AND PRINTERY ASSURED

The Mrs. Leonard Elmhirst Committee of New York City has approved a grant to Commonwealth covering the cost of a deep well and piping, and the equipment for a printing shop.

During the recent drought the springs which provide Commonwealth's present water supply ran dry, making a deep well an absolute necessity. The establishment of a printing plant will enable us to print our own fortnightly, publicize, stationery, etc., thereby insuring promptness and saving money.
Southern Agricultural Diversification: More Labor and Less Living
By Lem Harris and Hal Ware.

I. Agriculture in the cotton region is largely organized on a tenant basis. The mass of tenant farmers are on a permanent basis, with no financial reserve for hard times, and are therefore subject to destitution when any of the frequent agricultural disasters take place. In the past the tenants were usually carried by their landlords or time merchants and thus weathered such depressions. Now, however, due to the fall in the price of cotton combined with the drought, the landlords, too, are broke and cannot carry their tenants. Therefore the tenants become dependent upon outside agencies such as the Red Cross.

II. The low subsistence level of the Southern tenants, white and black, is not well known throughout the country. The dean of an agricultural college of one of the cotton states declares that after five years he continues to battle with the problem of the poverty which he sees upon entering the average tenant house. A Georgia landlord, who had spent three years in India states that the poverty of the South is not as prevalent as is evident in his Georgia township. A newspaper editor of Macon, Georgia, says that excluding the cities, where the average annual amount of the families who live within a radius of fifty miles from that city is around $80 to $150.

Now that the landlord is being pinched as well as the tenant, a new formula is being announced to cure the woes of the land. Diversification, which the hopeful business leaders of the community are advocating, is the slogan of the day. By diversification they mean that the farmer should choose as much of his own food and feel as possible, rather than raise one cash crop—cotton. Thus, they say, he can cut down on his cash purchases and minimize the hardship accruing from the low price of cotton—his basic cash crop. Furthermore, if the tenant has grown his own produce, much of it will not be destroyed by partial droughts and he will be able to weather some adverse years.

They point also to the fact that most of the Southern states import foods and feeds from the North which they could easily produce themselves and thus increase their own agricultural activity. They realize, for example, that Southern competition in selling corn or dairy products against the Middle-West would lower the price of these products, but they believe that the South would profit somewhat nevertheless. One expert, in advocating it, said that he believed it would mean forty cent corn.

Alabama and Mississippi have been carrying on intensive agitation amongst farmers to sell them this idea. Mississippi reports, for example, that the planted acreage for the state in oats this year has gone up 2,000 per cent over last year; that hay has gone up 600 per cent to 700 per cent; that the farmers in Mississippi and the Delta area have borrowed $11,000,000 for this year's crop; and that one of the provisions of the loan is that they must plant enough forage crops to cover their stock needs, and raise a garden at home. This instance in Mississippi could be repeated in all the other cotton states.

III. Why wasn't this scheme adopted before? Business men answer that it is because the farmers are lazy and prefer a short intensive season of raising cotton to the all-year-round job of diversified farming. These business men also rant against the splurges in which the foolish farmers indulge as soon as they cash in on a good crop. They place the onus of the blame for the present plight upon the farmers.

The case, when examined, appears otherwise. This present change of attitude is really a death-bed repentance upon the part of the business people, as one large merchant told it, because the tenets of the loans from time merchants and landlords was such that the only hope of the small farmer for making even a small profit lay in raising a large cash crop. Time merchants have generally charged usurious rates of interest ranging around 40 per cent or higher when all accumulated changes are included.

It was the common custom of the landloards to discourage or even prohibit tenants from raising their own gardens, for they knew their own cow because it would involve the use of scarce land for a purpose for which the land owner would receive no profit. Then also, if tenants had no garden they were forced to buy groceries from their landlord's stores. For those tenants who were in debt to the landlord, which was the usual case, there would frequently be specially higher prices to cover the risk of the indebted purchaser. These abuses have been prevalent. The cynicism of those who blame the tenants for their insolvent condition is apparent. These cynical business men who criticize the tenants for not saving when they get some money are the very ones who use high-pressure salesmanship to sell them cars and radios after a favorable season.

IV. The reason why all the prosperous people have combined upon the diversification program with such unity is because a spectre hangs over them. They are satisfied that cotton will remain near its present low price of ten cents a pound. They know that the average farmer raises cotton at a cost of around fifteen cents a pound and has no immediate hope of materially reducing that cost. They also know that if this continues another season or more that many will be forced from their farms and will be pressing on the cities to swell the number of the unemployed. Furthermore, the local leaders have considerable investments in plantations and are dismayed to see that these assets are freezing. If they believed, however, that the operation, county banks will fail and the local assets will be absorbed by the interests in the large cities. Therefore, they all agreed upon the plan of keeping the tenant on the land by any possible means.

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**FELLOW BUILDERS**

With this issue we welcome to our Maintenance Fund list Frank P. Walsh, famed labor attorney; Dr. Isador Lubin, labor economist; Fred Hanover, former student; and Bill Goodhope, Price Cunningham, former member of our teaching staff.

During the first ten days in April several hundred letters were sent to friends asking them to pledge and make it possible for us to give a campaign by May 1, International Labor Day. At this writing, April 16, we do not know the response. We are hoping that we will be able to announce to you in our next issue that our $2,500 Maintenance Fund has been assured for the next three years.

We Commoners feel that we have been making workers' education history during the past eight years. You, our friends, have had an active part in helping to make this history. You have the opportunity today to help us continue to make history. Workers' education in America is still in its infancy. Some of us must do the active work of pioneering. Others can only aid the pioneers.

A completed Maintenance Fund for Commonwealth would be the finest "embarkation" gift that friends could make. Dr. Zeph, outgoing Director, after eight years of pioneering, would also be the best sort of encouragement to Lucien Koch our incoming "chief." Say it with a pledge!

**CAMPAIGN RESULTS**

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**SOUTH DIVERSIFICATION**

(Continued from Page 2)

Diversification, then, will put off bankruptcy and with it the evil day. In one or two instances an agricultural expert called a meeting in a county seat which was attended by two bankers, eleven merchants, and fifty-eight landlords. They agreed to attempt to keep all their tenant houses occupied by having the tenant lease two acres of land if he would raise one and one-half acres of tobacco, which is a better cash crop than cotton in that region, and a half acre of garden. The landlord would supply the bricks and mortar, and the owner would take one-half of the tobacco crop. The expert claims that 1,000 families who would otherwise be adrift will thus be provided for. So low is the standard of living in the cotton area that landlords are seriously proposing schemes by which families will subsist upon the produce of two acres.

The future of diversification for the tenants is dependent upon the price of cotton. If the price should raise the tenants are sure to try to better themselves by their only gambling chance—a big cotton acreage. Down in Enterprise, Alabama, there is a negro tenant, who is the beneficiary of the ill weevil. The coming of the weevil forced diversification upon this community in 1919. The price of various farm products was high and so a measure of prosperity visited the district. However, with the falling of the price of cotton, the farmers all returned to cotton as their big crop and are now having to learn diversification all over again.

**THANKS, FRIENDS**

Edward Biltrott, Philadelphia, Pa., $5.00
P. N. Macklin, Madison, Wis., $11.00
Selig Perman, Madison, Wis., $10.00
J. W. Haff, Whiting, Ind., $11.00

**SOCIETY NOTES**

Porto Rico—Never! The last Society Notes grievously though unwittingly offended the native of fair Cuba, who was emblazoned in print as bailing from Porto Rico with tears in her eyes. The writer assured Gabino that it was all a ghastly mistake. She had thought that coming from any of those South Sea Islands was as good as coming from another. This is humane retraction of gross negligence and may all be forgiven. In the past, he has helped her peel potatoes, and there will be potatoes in the future!

Ladies First! And into the rain and sleet. Harriet and Dorothy started hitch-hiking under glowing skies, but Ross, Rigo, and Paul must needs wait for the sun. Two little girls out in the storm probably appealed to the protective instinct of big-hearted salesmen, but either Rigo or Paul, under dark clouds, would inspire suspicion if not downright terror. To Ross' dining smile, however, no mother-heart, at any time, could fail to go out.

What strange lure has New Orleans? Two more Commoners have succumbed. Mr. Alps and Anna Fisher could hold out no longer, and were gone a week, returning with the brighter eyes and ruddier cheeks so characteristic of a trip South.

See the little birdie? called Mr. Goodhope as he started to take a group picture. Whereupon, Baby Roland made a dash for the camera to really see the little birdie.

What is Home without a Father? "Us orphans" welcomed Zuech back with joy in our hearts and chicken for dinner. Three things make Commonwealth campus—Bill Conner with its cliff and valley, the Ouchita Mountains, which has been our Director, and not alone in flesh. The raggedy sweater he refuses to part with, and his mind, are symbols of what we hold dear in Commonwealth—sincere knowledge in external simplicity.

More raw material—and (how) now! Newly settled in our midst, George Fox from Washington, D. C., who didn't want to vote the pine, but is addicted to lonesome trails, (if there's a girl along); Louis Teitelbaum, from the University of Pittsburgh, who doesn't care much, though; Marion Hille, from New York City, who wants to plant onions; and Bill Leach, well, from Arkansas, whose drawl, however, does credit to all the Southern states.

Visitors—Mrs. Alma Wilson Bell, of Angola, Indiana, and party of three. Mrs. Bell is the daughter of Mrs. Mertie Wilson, long time friend of the school, and is interested in Labor Drama. She enjoyed seeing Commonwealth and was a very nice visitor to have—which same can be said of almost all of our company. We are lucky in our "unexpecteds!"

The ole swimmin' hole! coming back into obscurity the comparative obscurity of winter. Everybody but John Mars goes in, now, and maybe he will when the baby (Continued on Page Four)
**BOSCH GRANTED FELLOWSHIP**

Richard Bosch has been granted a Fellowship! The news made the rounds of the campus recently and was duly congratulated by every Commoner. The Fellowship is a grant from the Economics Department of the University of Wisconsin and provides $1,000 for a year of graduate study in Economics.

Bosch, after this summer on his farm in Minnesota, expects to be in Wisconsin next autumn with his wife and two small sons, Evan and Roland. He has been teaching Economics at Commonwealth for the past school year. When asked about his future plans he replied that his chief interest was in the development of "institutional Economics" and that he was planning eventually to throw his efforts into teaching.

Three years ago Bosch was a farmer in Minnesota, and active in the farm movement. Though he was already thirty and lacked even a high school education, he decided to study. He came to Commonwealth where he spent one year of intensive research. The following winter he entered Wisconsin as a graduate student in the Department of Economics where, after a year and a half, he took his Masters Degree in Economic Theory.

**THE ROBOT TO HIT**

(Continued from Page 1)

farming, Ware suggests "co-operation among farmers in production" at the same time realizing the tremendous problem of financing and organization that would involve. "And yet, I have seen the individualistic Russian peasant organized," he said.

"Russia" was the subject of the first group meeting. Harris told of factory life and of cultural movements. He had helped to manufacture the first Russian-made Combine. Ware spoke mainly of the problem of getting the individualistic Russian peasant to join a collective farm. He, with his gang of "North Dakota boys" had bought the first fleet of tractors into Russia, and has been active in organizing Russian government farms since 1922.

Ware and Harris were kept busy answering questions from Russian university students. Their story consisted of interesting bits about peasant life, factory problems, the attempts to dispel illiteracy, the way in which leisure time is spent, the exploitation of the Kulak, the peasantry of the Nepean, life in the "collective" and so on.

While here, Ware and Harris visited neighbors, hiked six miles to the peak of Rich Mountain, chopped wood and played volley ball with students and teachers.

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**SOCIOLOGY NOTES**

(Continued from Page Three)

chickens demand less care. Anyway, he deserves the benefit of the doubt.

Temps Fugit—and recently in the dining hall it fugited more than ever, or else with some twenty clocks going full blast the solemn fact was borne on us to a louder degree. One o’clock was donated to the Commons, and then it was heard Mabel ask John if he didn’t want to throw in his alarm clock, ergo! Most of them had alarms that shouted their vigor during supper, and the ones that had long since passed their prime lent moral support. All we needed was a gingham dog and a calico cat.

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**SEMINAR NOTES**

Friday night is associated in the minds of Commoners with seminars. Started some years ago by "father" Zeuch, the seminars have become an institution rich in custom and tradition. It is the one class attended by nearly all Commoners.

At its birth the seminar was cultural in content. The first dealt with the drama, those reporting covering some one phase. The meeting at that time was held at Zeuch’s cottage, beginning at seven-thirty after supper. Everyone came, sprawled on the floor or on the floor, and shared sketches from the works of Henrik Ibsen or perhaps Bernard Shaw, and to the comments interspersed by the students reporting. The talk was usually followed by refreshments prepared by Zeuch—his favorite treat was french-drip coffee the preparatory art of which he learned in the old French quarter in New Orleans. Then there was discussion. It was often eleven o’clock before the last lingerer recalled unfinished studies and left for his dorm, the second seminar of the evening.

Later seminars have covered a wide range of subjects: History of Economics; Thought; Modern Social Thinkers; Trade Unionism; and Labor Legislation. The form of the seminars in 1931 is much the same as it was in 1927 save that they are now held more frequently and without refreshments. Students interested in making intensive studies in certain fields enroll in the seminar. During the past quarter five students have been in residence at the seminar, and others take part in a seminar and a seminar in labor. They prepared papers on the conspiracy cases, the injunction, workers’ compensation, unemployment, and arbitration of labor disputes.

Commoners may listen to reports, ask questions and participate in the discussions. At each seminar a volunteer sums up the labor news of the week. Nearly all Commoners attend the seminars. It is thought that some are lured by the refreshments. Rigo, Cusan student, says that he never feels better than at seminar. Yet, if discussions are indicative, most come because they are interested. The discussion period usually lasts over an hour and the chairmen always has a job "being fair," that is, giving everyone "his say.”

During the spring quarter Dr. Zeuch is conducting a seminar in "Theories of the State.”

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Commonwealth College, Mena, Arkansas
I hereby pledge the year to the Commonwealth Maintenance Fund for 1931, 1932, and 1933.
(Signed)