IMPROVEMENTS ON SCHOOL PROPERTY

Farm Now Free From Debt For First Time In Many Years

Plans for a big increase in the productivity of the Commonwealth farms are being worked out by Marshall Pike, Commonwealth farmer. Lucien Koch, director, and the executive committee of the college. Among the innovations will be a seven-acre truck farm in the low land next to the creek to supplement the gardens upon the campus bluff.

The new garden is in a position to be irrigated. Pike believes that, with proper management, this garden will produce green vegetables the year around to feed one hundred people, and in addition will help stock the cellar each summer.

A new cow shed, a new potato house and a new chicken house are planned. A new stock of chickens, several additional milk cows, and at least two breed sows will be purchased. Thus equipped, the farm will supply all the meat needed by the community, as well as the milk, butter, eggs.

It has been discovered that in various parts of Arkansas farm land will produce two crops each year, and this will be tried on a small scale at Commonwealth next year. Soy beans are planted in the early spring over a crop of winter wheat. After the wheat is harvested the beans grow rapidly, building up the soil and producing an excellent hay crop. Commonwealth would not attempt to market its wheat, of course, but would either purchase a small flour mill or raise only enough for the chickens and hogs.

For the first time in many years Commonwealth has its 320 acres entirely clear of debt. The permanent staff will be increased so that it will not be necessary to rely entirely upon student labor. With home-grown bacon, eggs, butter, beef, and perhaps flour, the running expenses of the college will be reduced a great deal.

We are in the midst of one of the innumerable springs that occur every winter in Arkansas. Was it Emily Dickinson who called Indian Summer a "blue and gold mistake?" These springs are green mistakes. The grass starts growing. Trees that are older than we are start budding out. But we cannot be fooled. We cling to our flannels and scarcely ever write even the first line of a lyric poem until much later in the year.

The only society in sight at present is the Commonwealth herd, which is chewing its cud in the warm sunshine of the late afternoon upon what otherwise might be called our lawn. The day has been a good one for the bosses. We know because they are bigger on one side than on the other.

It would seem that the cow has several stomachs. During rush hours she fills stomach number one, giving little attention to the detail of mastication. But stomach number one is not centrally located and therefore she loses symmetry. During quiet hours of the evening she belches, and you can see the lump travel up her neck as the grass returns to her mouth for re-chewing.

We are not quite clear on what happens after that. She puts it through some highly technical process, shifting it from this stomach to that, until at last her symmetry is restored and she is at peace with the world. She deserves, of course, the utmost commendation for having evolved the process, and she is perfectly justified in her insistence upon a comparatively large amount of leisure time for its completion.

Readers are requested not to write in asking for further details, as for instance whether or not she gets hungry in all her

THOUSAND BOOKS DONATED IN YEAR

Commonwealth Library Has Seven Thousand Volumes, 3,000 Pamphlets

An increase of over 1,000 volumes, only 69 of which were purchased in the 1932 record of the Commonwealth library, according to O. Hittenrauch, librarian. The library now contains more than 7,000 volumes, or 100 volumes for each person in the community. It receives 170 periodicals, most of them labor papers, and spends only $20 per year for subscriptions.

These figures give some notion of the generosity displayed by the friends of the institution. Almost every day books, pamphlets or magazine subscriptions are received. The pamphlet collection numbers about 3,000, and is alphabetized according to subject matter.

The chief accomplishment of the year has been the cataloging and filing of these pamphlets, according to Hittenrauch. "This has been a busy decade for labor pamphleteers," he declares, "and we have about everything that has been published, I suppose."

The second biggest job of the year in the Commonwealth library has been the cataloging of the thousand new books. To facilitate research, five cards have been filed for each of these books. "You can find one of these cards, be you ever so dumb."

This winter the library has been a comfortable place for readers, for the first time in the history of the school, and from one fifth to one half of the entire community may be found there any evening after supper. "They come he'e cold and ignorant," Hittenrauch says, "and they leave here warm and enlightened. I can't give any figures upon the amount of ignorance liqui dated he'e daily, but it would run to a colossal sum. Library dates are unknown at Commonwealth. The motives of our readers are of the very highest."

Continued page Three
ARKANSAS MINERS AND THEIR TROUBLES

BY LIEBIE VOLFE
COMMONWEALTH STUDENT

If a man is injured in mines through no fault of his own, he must fight for compensation in the opera­tion-controlled courts. Since he has no money for lawyers, and the courts are all against him, he has little chance. I don't think that no miner ever gets compensation for his injury. The company says it's out of its way. This is always first on the spot when the injured man opens his eyes after the accident. He somehow or other gets the man to sign away all his right to prosecute the company. Sometimes he is given a small compensation to make him sign. Sometimes he doesn't get nothing.

"Over at Number Three mine an old fellow who lived all alone was so badly crushed by falling rock that he was paralyzed from the hip down. When he was pulled out from under the rocks, company men rushed him home and left him there, where there was no one to take care of him. They knew he had no kinfolk who would row, so they saved themselves a hospital bill.

"One man described to me an explosion he was in. He saved himself by rolling into a pool of water. But his buddy was burned almost within reach. He showed me the hand which had been severely burned when he reached out to attempt to drag his friend to safety. Apparently the doomed man had been stoveped. He had just sat there on the ground while the flame curled around over his ears, caught his hair, his eyebrows...

"But death is not the end. The mine operator has insured his men for $10,000. Almost on the heels of death, the family of the dead miner will be visited by a company lawyer. His task is to get the bereaved to sign away all the company's rights for about $1,000 in cash. Usually he succeeds. The mine operator is $9,000 in the pocket.

I can not refrain from exclaiming, "They even wring profit from your corpse?"

When I have heard all I can stand of such stories, I ask about the Red Cross. They are eager to talk about it. Every one in Sebastian County, they say, is living on Red Cross relief. Absolutely everyone. To my regret I have no chance to verify this statement. But the ray of solemn face, nodding approval of this statement, has left me convinced that if not everyone, then nearly everyone in Sebastian County depends on the Red Cross for relief.

"They tell me something else I can not verify. For every $2 that goes into the Red Cross, only one comes out in relief. Perhaps it is not true, but it is significant that they believe it.

They ask if I have ever seen sacks of Red Cross flour. I have. I have seen too pitifully many little children struggling under the weight of one of those sacks.

"Well, you know where it says on them 'Not to be sold?' Well, they do not sell them. But you have to pay $1.00 for every 200 pounds. It is for freight charges, they tell you."

I find this to be true in one community. Possibly that community is an exception.

How about the farms, ask. Do these help keep them alive?

Many have been sold off their little farms. Forced to the towns, they must contend with higher living expenses and the difficulties of transportation to and from the mines. Others are still raising their own food. But the miners' wives get tired of it. It makes the men too independent. They are almost all tax delinquent and land poor. Most of the farms in the community could be sold for taxes, if there were any buyers.

As farmers, they must contend with bankers. The farmer has to go to the banker for a loan with which to buy his next season's crop. His prospects are good, so the loan is made. However, there is a little detail that the banker does not like. The note comes due in July. He has no crop coming in in July, so he will have no money then and he has now. But the banker explains that it is merely the custom of the bank to have all loans mature at that time. Just helps to keep the books straight. If he cannot pay in July, it will be merely a matter of form to have the loan extended. When July comes, the banker keeps his word. The note is extended. However, there is a little matter of 20 per cent or 25 per cent compound interest which must be paid on the extension. A mere bagatelle which the banker failed to mention.

What about their union, I ask.

The chorus of replies is so voluminous, so emotional, it is difficult to make out what is being said. But the tone is unmistakable. They are disgusted. "Company union" some call it.

"The International Treasury has a fund of $32,000 for needy miners. We are sent for and are told to look out for ourselves. The National office would not help us. The fund is deposited in Lewis' personal
stomachs at once, whether or not she can shunt off one of her stomachs when it is temporarily out of order, into which stomach she drinks her water, and so forth. Our knowledge of the process is extremely superficial, and we have already gone into it much further than we intended.

♦ ♦ ♦

To get back to the Commonwealth herd: These cows, and all others we are sure, live intensely. They would be the first to resent that opprobrious term "contented." The Society Editor has remarked about the pasture fence, where, in an effort to better their condition and incidentally to impair their symmetry, they have broken through.

♦ ♦ ♦

The economic urge drives them on, even as it drives us. Mass resentment flares up. Not always do they meekly give up the milk which is the product of their skilled rumination. The Society Editor has been drenched in this white fluid, has nursed shin bruises, as a result of an altercation with a cow who was not content to be exploited, to have her young one deprived of the nourishment she had prepared for it.

♦ ♦ ♦

Individuals of this heard have had their adventures. "Heartie," so named because she has a white heart on her forehead, was once very near the point of death. She had stepped in the path of the Commonwealth truck and had suffered a broken leg. The leg was carefully splinted, but for weeks she lingered between life and death. But because she was very young she pulled through. Now she is flowering into splendid young cowhood with only a lump on her leg as a reminder of her descent into the valley of the shadow.

♦ ♦ ♦

There are, of course, conflicts within the group. One such is taking place just now. The youngest calf wears a muzzle which permits him to graze but does not allow him to get his mother's milk. An adolescent calf, twice the size of the little one, wants that milk. He wears no muzzle because he is so small that his mouth would dry. The mother of the young one, a matronly soul who carries her years very well, does not want to give her milk to the wrong calf but she cannot bring herself to get really angry. And so they waltz around and around; she pushing him gently, he persistently seeking, after the manner of youth.

♦ ♦ ♦

But the sun is setting, the moon is rising, the cattle are straggling toward the barn, the supper bell is ringing, and we must seek other society.

♦ ♦ ♦

The crows in the garden to the moon-ward are an interesting group from a sociological point of view. If we were better equipped we would take a shot at one of them. As it is, one of these birds. A farmer of this neighborhood says that a crow will not return to the field; but if three men go in and two leave, the crow will fly back to his dinner. Maybe.

♦ ♦ ♦

Some scientist has said that a crow lives 200 years, and if this is true it would partly account for the wisdom shown by some of these birds. A farmer of this neighborhood says that a crow can count to two but not to three. If two men go into a cornfield and hide, and then one of them leaves, the crow will not return to the field; but if three men go in and two leave, the crow will fly back to his dinner. Maybe.

♦ ♦ ♦

Perhaps these crows tapped over the Indian village that stood on the fertile land down by the creek where we now find so many arrowheads; flapped overhead the slave plantation which, tradition has it, was once located here; and now fliap over a non-factional labor institution. There goes the last supper bell!
"Wally" Kern is one of the new students this semester and came to Commonwealth from St. Louis, where he has lived in Tennessee, Michigan, and Wisconsin. He received his education in a Northern farm school and has one year at a Milwaukee high school. From that he graduated into the ranks of the workers and has been employed in a sheet metal shop, as a punch press operator and followed his father's trade of machinist.

He says: "I was holding a job where three men were employed before. I was forced to lift pans of steel that weighed between a hundred and two hundred and twenty pounds. I also learned to regard a person as a machine instead of a human being."

About 20 years old and of medium size, "Wally" is familiar on the campus and is one of the kitchen workers. He rooms with the school's "incubator socialist" and the two of them brush out points at great length. If there is anything in this theory of learning by discussion, "Wally" is getting himself a good education.

Commonwealth discovered new entertainment talent this quarter in the persons of three young German students who sing in their native language, to the accompaniment of guitar and mandolin. One of the trio is Anna Eifler, of Syracuse. She attended public school in Germany and served a three-year apprenticeship in a shoe factory. Her father was always active in the labor movement, so it comes naturally for Anna to be interested in workers' education. She was doing housework and attending night school in Syracuse when she decided to attend Commonwealth. Upon arriving, Anna was put to work sewing patches on the seats of Commonwealth's twisters and kindred tasks as her share of the industrial jobs around the place.

Blond and studious, Anna is one of the regular habitues of the reserve reading room in the library.

From a little town in Connecticut, by way of a technical college in Massachusetts, comes Joe Harting, an immigrant's son, who was early sent to learning school, where he "learned such arts as manipulating a scrub brush four times longer than my hand and weeding long rows of onions without breaking my back." Bob started at a polytechnic institute in the Bay State, but the depression liquidated his education in that direction. He remembered that he had "felt vaguely grieved that classmates played tennis in afternoons while I hoed potatoes" and began to cogitate about that system which had simultaneously, ten million unemployed and 300 millionaires. Bob does a lot of reading, but he has also found time for camping and swimming, his favorite sports. He is a short, wiry fellow with lots of energy, some of which he permits to consume in serving breakfasts and washing dishes.

Commonwealth always asks its applicants what kind of jobs they have held. That is important, for it helps to place the student in the right kind of campus industrial work, once he gets on location. Last fall, a young man from LaCrosse, Wisconsin, applied for enrollment, and was disappointed that he had held "about 101" different kinds of jobs. The administration thought Russell Rattele's answer was hyperbolic, but now they are all convinced. For "Russ" is the new industrial manager, which means that he directs all the work and has to be ready to lend a hand at any of it. Hard work is no new thing for Russ, who has been a farmer, laborer in an automobile shop, employee of a shoe factory, riding instructor at a military academy and a salesman. As campus foreman, Russ keeps enough details in his mind to drive the normal person berserk, and finds time to study, too. He lives at a men's dormitory called "Commonwealth Towers," an other sturdy proletarian, a Texas cotton picker, and the two of them solve the changes in men's fashions by wearing the typical Commonwealth overalls and blue denim shirts.