In a resident labor school with an average population of fifty-nine can be operated on a cash budget of $6,281.35, providing students, teachers and maintenance workers contribute 57.715 hours of labor. Thus, the report points out, "Commonwealth college is seventy percent self-supporting; that is, more than two thirds of the school's upkeep comes from work done on the campus, while less than one third comes from cash support—tuitions, contributions, etc."

The report for 1932 indicates that the cash cost of maintenance per person per quarter (three months) was $29, as compared with $37 for 1931. The average population of the school for 1932 was 59; and for 1931 was 31. The average enrollment for 1932 was 40; and for 1931 was 19.

The school spent during the year $14,428.75. Sixty-four hundred dollar's of this went for necessary additions to plant and equipment, including a Delco electric plant, a canning plant, laundry equipment, an addition to the library building, books, a print shop and printing equipment, a well and water system, a refrigerator, an electric motor, a second-hand truck and a second-hand automobile, four mules, five head of cattle, two wagons, beds and mattresses, lumber, roofing, hardware, cement, stoves, wire, pipes, a filing cabinet, stencil for addressing machine, etc.

The purpose of the mass conference was to complete the organization, within the American Federation of Labor, of a Progressive Federation of Labor somewhat along the lines of the Progressive Miners of America.

The P. M. A., now six months old, has a membership of 32,000. Its officials have honestly changed the program drawn up by the Progressive Trade Union Committee of Gillespie.

This is the third delegation sent from Commonwealth into an area where a labor struggle is being carried on. Both of the first two delegations met with violent treatment from officials and gunmen.

If time permits the delegation may visit the coal fields of Franklin County where the Progressive Miners are carrying on their light.
Boys of the wood crew hold a high place in Commonwealth society. There is a certain heroism associated with the swinging of an ax. Office workers, of course, understand the tremendous importance of their task of explaining; but, small in a crowd or all over the world how this unique school operates; the dish washers and the laundry workers have a proper appreciation of their own significance as artists; the cooks know their value as artists in the medium of food; the carpenters understand the role that shelter has played in the history of civilization; but the boys of the wood crew have a Paul Bunyan swagger which cannot be imitated.

As the one o'clock bell rings they march off the campus carrying double-bitted axes that glint in the sun, sledges, wedges that have been mushroomed, saws with beautiful and dangerous long teeth. They go into the woods and take off their shirts. They slap trees familiarly and discuss trees between the chopping edge and the splitting edge; have to be taught to hit where they want to hit. They chew tobacco and make secret resolves to spit the stuff out before it makes them sick.

Unless they are very new at Commonwealth they have a tan thick enough to withstand the Arkansas sun for hours, and callistories where the ax handles and saw handles rub hardest. The farm boys on the crew swing axes with precision, although, coming for the most part from other sections of the country, they know little enough about Arkansas timber. Young industrial workers, with brawn enough perhaps but no experience, have to learn the heft of an ax; have to learn to hit where they aim; have to be taught to distinguish between the chopping edge and the splitting edge; have to be taught to glance overhead before they swing, for a low-hanging branch that might deflect the blow; have to be warned against driving vigorously toward their own shins or toes or toward any part whatsoever of a laboring companion; have to be cautioned not to plunge the ax into the ground, or, in splitting, not to overhit the mark and shatter the ax handle.

Very few even of the farm boys know how to pull a saw. To the uninitiated it would seem a most simple task to drag a saw to and fro across a log, but actually one becomes a passably good sawyer only after months of practice, and to become adept requires years. The beginner rides the saw, twists it, bends it—does all manner of things deleterious. He matches his strength against that of his partner, so the job becomes not a cooperative enterprise but a tug of war.

Felling a tree is a task for experience. You march around the tree, squinting upward, to determine which way it leans, then you estimate the weight of its branches, the strength of the wind and other factors, to determine where it "wants to fall." But it may want to fall across a fence, or want to fall against another tree and "hang." If it wants to fall where you don't want it to fall, you must "throw" it, by the use of wedges.

When you know where you are going to try tolund it, you arrange "blocks" (short lengths of log) for it to fall upon, for it cannot be sawed up if it is flat upon the ground. You "notch" it carefully on the side toward which it is to go. This is done to prevent it from splitting. Then, after tilting your saw at exactly the right angle, you begin sawing upon the side opposite the notch. Perhaps after you have the saw well buried, the trunk begins to "bind"—that is, it bites down with its newly made mouth upon your saw. If this happens you "wedge" it, driving a wedge into the cut to take the weight off the saw. At last the tree begins to pop. You yell "timber." The tree tilts, slowly at first, and the top hisses as it gathers speed. There is a resounding crash that echoes through the timber, and the tree is down.

Maybe it hit the blocks you had prepared for it. If not you must get a "prize" pole and "prize" it up while your helper puts a block under it. Then you drive a wedge of suitable length. If it is oak, hickory, pine, etc., it may be split, but if it is gum it must be "slabbed." To slab you strike near the edge of the block with the bit of your ax at right angles to the radius. The pieces come off—if you hit hard enough—in slabs.

Many stories are told of the unique experiences of Commonwealth hewers of wood. About a year ago the foreman of the crew assigned a doctor of philosophy, who was an expert upon international finance, the task of felling a small tree. The learned doctor had as an assistant a boy who admitted he knew nothing at all of felling, but the doctor was well versed, he said, in the art. The foreman noted how the tree properly, started the saw at the right angle and left, confident that nothing could go wrong. Felling the tree was properly the work of eight or ten minutes.

An hour later the foreman, working in another part of the woods, remembered that he had heard no crash. He went to investigate and learned that the doctor and his assistant had sawed almost all the way through the tree, but that the doctor had then decided the tree was not going to fall properly and had pulled out the saw and had started sawing upon the wrong side, just below the notch. The tree, of course, had clamped down upon the saw and now held it as in a vise. The doctor had attributed the difficulty to the faulty manufacture of the saw, and was explaining how, under our present economic system, international finance was in such a chaotic state that saw manufacturers had managed to turn out worthless products.

After a tree is down, hauled to the campus and burned, it might seem that all evidence as to the inexpertness of the crew that felled it had been destroyed, but not so, for there still remain the stumps. To the expert eye the stump reveals the exact method of felling. Every minor error of the fellers is there displayed. All through the Commonwealth timber there are stumps which say all too plainly that trees which once stood there were not felled but worried down. These stumps are monuments to earnest, bewildered blistered, dejected but unproductive young workers. Neighbors refer to them as "Commonwealth stumps," but Commonwealth hewers, maintaining that it is only during the month of October, when a new crew is being broken in, that such stumps are left.

But no matter how many bitter humiliations young Paul Bunyan may have had in the timber, no matter...
EXpropriation of the Small Farmer

BY CLAY FULKS

are degraded below the point at which even exploitation can be profitably perpetrated upon them. Economic irony could hardly be pushed further than the "charitable" feeding, on Red Cross slop, of the very workers who, by their labor, feed the world.

The majority of American farmers have just recently crossed the "continental divide" separating independent proprietorship from modernized serfdom; that is to say, the majority of American farmers are now tenants. An American peasantry, legally robbed of its inheritance, now delves destructively and multiplies miserably in soil where its proud, upstanding forefathers worked in temporary security, in hope, and in a tolerable measure of triumph.

This general, systematic, and accelerating spoliation of the American small farmer is certainly to be regarded as one of the most dramatic studies resulting directly from the culmination of capitalism. But this is not to say that the devastating effects of the expropriation of the small farmer stop with him; its effects are also felt by the industrial workers of the cities.

From all the agricultural states come figures, almost astronomical, telling the terrible tale of the wanton subjugation and ruin of the small farmer by the devouring capitalist. In poor old Mississippi, one day last spring, 40,000 fam homes went up in flames and the hammer; but Pat Harrison, senior Democrat from the Senate of Mississippi welfare kindly offered to console his despoiled constituents with the timely observation:--"Other states are in exactly the same position. The difference is that what Mississippi did yesterday, ten states are doing piece-meal."--In Iowa recent foreclosures took in 353,388 acres of farm land valued at $26,388,800, thus uprooting a whole host of Republican hog-and-hominy raisers.

From Georgia comes the story that fifty-five thousand rural refugees—get this, "refugees"—have abandoned their homes. Eventually those poor "cracker's" had been harassed and goaded almost to desperation. In North Carolina, according to Professor Branson of the agricultural department of the State University, "a restive class of farmers, greater in number than a million landless, nomadic farmers was yearly wandering from Dan to Beersheba and back again," in search of sustenance even before the present "temporary" depression settled down upon the country. During the past decade, Montana's 35,000 wheat farmers dwindled to 14,000.

From the wheatfields of North Dakota, likewise, come reports of wholesale foreclosures. By 1930 farm mortgages in the five chief grain states had risen to 67 per cent of owner-operated farms and as a result thousands of farms are now the property of a few, the wealthy is much too high. Summing up, in the five-year period between 1925 and 1930, forced sales and "voluntary" bankruptcy extended to 24 per cent of all the farms in the loudly-celebrated Land of the Free.

But from out this general gloom there are heartening reports of successful mass resistance to foreclosure and eviction assaults. Particularly from the grain states of the Northwest and from some of the dairy regions of the East come these evidences that there are still sparks of liberty and self-respect left unextinguished in the hearts of the farmers; while from the prostrate cotton states come reports of the brutal murder—AUTHORIZED murder—of tenant farmers who dare attempt to organize for self-protection—especially if such tenant farmers had been so criminally careless as to be born Negroes. But of course, such atrocities are to be expected in Ku Kluxdom.

And now, by Godfrey, what if some of those lank and hungry farmers, finally goaded to desperation by the instaible exploitation of the capitalist, should fire another shot that could be heard 'round the world? Wouldn't that be just awful—good news?—I mean interesting news.

Despite these sporadic and momentarily successful instances of mass resistance so the devastating capitalist, however, it is all too probable, in this writer's humble opinion, that the annihilation and degradation of the millions of American small farmers will be consummated before the coming Revolution can reach and save them.

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INTRODUCING
Members of Commonwealth Group

Operating Expenses
Of College for 1932

Most of the money for this new equipment came from two grants, one of $5,000 from the Carnegie Corporation, and another of $1,737.61 from the Mrs. Leonard Elmhirst Committee.

Students paid $4,601.47, as tuition for the year. The Commonwealth store and the Fortnightly subscriptions brought in several hundred.

Friends of the school donated $1,737.61, and paid $691 upon pledges. Total cash receipts, not including the grants mentioned above, amounted to $8,287.03.

Expenses for food were $2,278.87. The farm supplied $870.25 of this in produce, vegetables, etc.; and $523.14 of canned goods were used from the cellar. More than 54,000 meals were served during the year, at an approximate cost of 7 cents per meal.

The teaching and maintenance group, numbering on an average 19, received no salaries and cost the school only 773.61 for the year. This money went to pay three hospital bills and several dentist bills, and covered the cost of the clothing, tobacco, razor blades, etc. used by the members of the group.

The income from the farm, stock and poultry was $1,405.96. Operating expenses were $783.48; and the gain amounted to $702.48.

Commonwealth teachers taught 4,013 hours during the year. Teachers, students and maintenance workers worked, all told, 2,204 hours in the library, 6,922 hours on the farm, 1,669 hours clearing land, 1,596 hours caring for the stock, 11,336 hours in the kitchen, 2,564 hours canning, 9,600 hours in business management (office work, publicity, bookkeeping, printing, etc.); 5,196 hours cutting, hauling and distributing wood; 7,407 hours putting up buildings and repairing old buildings; 2,235 hours in the laundry; 2,888 hours at miscellaneous tasks.

This is the second year that a detailed itemized account has been kept of the income, expenditures and industrial work of the community, and upon the basis of these findings a budget is being worked out that will enable the Association to plan its expenditures in accordance with the relative needs of its departments. To meet the deficit the school will start its campaign late in February.

While strolling the campus: Fred Squires, Manhattan boy who went native by acquiring a ten-gallon hat, gets the college slang of males to gallop, and swells with justifiable pride . . . Dropping into the office, we learn that the other day a package of books came to Commonwealth all the way from the principality of Monaco . . . the new reading room in the library continues to be the second most popular single room on the campus (winner: Commons), with current periodicals and reserve books running neck and neck for reader interest . . . When a fellow shows up at supper with wet hair and tells everybody he's been swimming, we instinctively make a mental note to see if there is any smoke coming from the fire under the water heater for the showers . . . We wish all friends of Commonwealth could have seen the proletarian cabaret the entertainment committee staged the other night. It was colorful, to understand. The campus is usually vivid, due to Commoners' informality in dress, much more so than the Hart, Schaffner and Marxism of other colleges, and when students here deliberately costume, the effect is amazing . . . The local men of brawn are still talking about their posters around the power saw. It seems some one filed the saw teeth and the crew was able to cut three times the usual quota of stove wood for an afternoon's work.

However, we still detect a certain reluctance to free play of the arm muscles in some of the record-breaking timbermen.

Oppek Returns to Begin Gardening Work

Alois Oppek, gardener, returned recently from Malvern, Arkansas, where he has been working for the past six weeks. Alois, a native of Austria, has worked at gardening in Austria, Germany, England and various parts of the United States. He has been at Commonwealth now for two years, but each winter during the "slack" season he leaves for a period in order to "see new people and find out what is going on in the world."

He will start the new year's work at Commonwealth by pruning the apple and peach trees, planting raspberries, and preparing to beautify the campus.

Correction

In Libbie Volpie's article in the January 15 issue of the Fortnightly reference was made to "Local 118." This should have read "Local 1018."