

THE CO-OPERATORS' DEPARTMENT.

By the Christian Corporation.

Collectivism, or Communism.

[Paper read before a Populist club in Omaha by Mr. Walter Brown, of that city.]

(CONCLUDED FROM LAST WEEK.)

Earnestness of purpose and hard work are the great elements of success in all these enterprises which have succeeded in the United States, and indeed, everywhere, and it is needless to say that all individuals who compose such a party must sincerely believe in socialism and must forget their individual self as far as possible in laboring for the common good.

The Amara Community of Iowa, are inspirations, and the Shakers of New York state—some at least of them—are celibates. Some forbade smoking and some required abstinence from spirituous liquors, and so forth. The Icarians, which had their origin in Cabel's utopian dream in 1848, came the nearest to realizing an example of what a rational, sound, Democratic commune could do more than any of the others.

The Zoar Co-operation Colony of Tuscarawas county, Ohio, is mostly composed of Germans, though there are Americans and others among their number. They own seven thousand acres of land and engaged in manufacturing and producing everything they use or consume.

So much for societies formed in the past which turned out successfully. They have led the way and proved that combined effort is as far superior to individual effort as night is to day.

Now let us turn to what the study of these old societies is leading us modern pioneers to in the way of Co-operation and Communism. In a letter I have from Mrs. Francis J. Allen, who edits the Co-operators' Directory of Pittsburg, Kansas (the best book for Co-operators which I have ever read) she says she regards the depressed condition of the business world and the consequent distress and straits of the people, almost as a blessing in disguise; the hitherto unutilized system of corporate work of these religious enthusiasts which have been held together by a common religious belief, is being studied and their business methods applied in new colonies whose name will soon be legion, and the new religion which will in time cement them together as firmly as any of our century old communities will be the glorious creed whose foundation principle is "The Brotherhood of Man."

fraternity one hundred years ago. While the new plans of work in colonies have in many cases been copied from older societies, says Mrs. Allen, yet many have been greatly improved upon, while others fell short in their plans and consequently failed.

The most successful work is the labor exchange, which may be used in cities and towns, and is equally successful in colonial work, for having been thoroughly tested in a business point of view, the practicality of the scheme is beyond doubt.

One great difficulty in co-operative work has been a disposition to limit, to draw lines of conduct and conscience, making persons who have fled from the tyranny or bad temper of the employer feel that they have exchanged the tyranny of the individual for the tyranny of the community. The labor exchange, being a purely business arrangement, interferes with neither conscience nor creed and therefore becomes what it should be, a remunerative republic, free, prosperous and happy.

In conclusion I want to call attention to some colonies which have advanced beyond the stage of talking and discussion, and are showing the world today what modern ideas applied to every day co-operation will do.

The Gibsonville colony of Genesee county Michigan, was started in 1893, and has now net resources of about \$3,000. It has about five hundred acres of land, which is being brought into a high state of cultivation.

The Ruskin Colony in Tennessee has been a grand success. It was first started in July, 1894, and "The Coming Nation" is edited from that place and is a fitting representative of the spirit that dominates the individuals that compose the Society.

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INSURANCE DEPARTMENT

Conducted by J. Y. M. SWINART. Correspondence solicited. Fire, cyclone or hail.

The state auditor tells me that it was not his intention to have the county mutuals examined, and that he gave Mr. Dorsey no authority to do so, at \$10 per day and expenses, or at any other price, and that if Mr. Dorsey told me that he was going to do so by authority from him he was mistaken.

We are of the adverse opinion, but do not now refuse nor have we refused to allow his man to examine our books, and I presume that there is not a secretary in the state that would refuse to have his books examined, because Mr. Moore would not send out a man unless he was an expert accountant, and we secretaries would all no doubt get pointers as to how others kept their books.

All who wrote me expressed the same idea, that is, that the auditor or his deputy was entirely welcome to look over their books, but that they had no money to pay the exorbitant fees demanded.

By the way, it is no more than fair to say that Dorsey agreed to come down to \$7.50 per day with me, because I was the secretary of two companies and he could board at home.

Several secretaries have expressed themselves in favor of a meeting of representatives of all mutual companies in the state, for the purpose of comparing notes. I will say that we have had two meetings of this kind, and would have had one this winter had the times not been so hard.

In this department we hope to interest all members of all companies, the same as the Financial Institute does the mutual men in Iowa, and ask that each secretary will give us a report of all losses whether fire, lightning or cyclone, on what, and amount; and as the first three months in this year will soon be gone, I hope that each secretary will write me on the 1st of April in answer to the following:

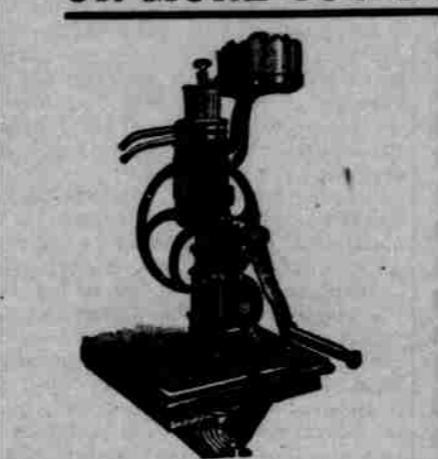
Now brother secretaries, if you will comply with this request, I think that we can make the insurance department of April 11, one of the best it has ever been. I will promise to do my part if you will do yours, and will send a copy to all whom you may name, even if you name every member of your companies.

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