

EQUALITY NOTES

Edited by Mrs. Annie Billingsley

Our colonists are hard at work as usual, and reasonably happy and contented. The colony buildings are on a side hill, surrounded by trees, and from the top of the hill, the bay and Samish Island can be seen. Farther distant are the snow-capped Olympic mountains, and resting on them are often seen the clouds.

The scenery is beautiful; of course we appreciate the fact that we cannot live on the beauty of the scenery, but in providing for the needs of our bodies we strive not to forget the love of the beautiful that should be fostered in our souls; for this life is more than food and clothing, and starved natures never fully expand.

The vegetation is green continually, and near us are two fine springs from which the water flows cold and sweet. In time we expect to have a lovely place; but as even Rome was not built in a day, so we must expect to use time and patience in perfecting the grounds.

The colonists are mostly kind and considerate to each other and in their intercourse with the outside world. Our work is divided into departments which are overseen by superintendents who regulate the work according to the force under them. As in a community of this size there must necessarily be some drudgery, we endeavor to divide it as well as we can.

The people here are a very wide-awake class of people, and many persons not fully educated in this socialistic movement, would be surprised at the amount of general information that the "despised laboring class" have gathered up.

We try to live in peace and love with all; and in benefiting our fellow man, to also benefit ourselves.

As C. E. Walker, our colony secretary and socialistic lecturer, says, "If we say 'Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,' we must do all we can to bring the kingdom here." Now we are trying to make us all homes here: real homes, in the true sense of the word; and we will. FAIL is a word we do not choose to learn; our aim is high but in time we will reach it. We feel that our hope and dependence is in the young and rising generation; and will do what we can to keep them happy and contented, and to educate them in socialistic principles. We have a school for the little ones and hope soon to have sufficient room for them all. For recreation we have music and dancing occasionally, and have started a literary to be held once a week. Then with our regular and special meetings our evenings are very well filled. Our hearts are in this movement, and we try to meet the realities of life as men and women should, putting aside all little prejudices.

We hope soon to have many things we have not now, and in time all good things will come. We are as a class of people too ambitious, to let time and opportunity go by. We know we are building permanent homes for ourselves, and our love and pride of independence will carry us through all disagreeables. They are as pebbles in the way of a mighty army, which is fast increasing in numbers and strength, until it will reach from shore to shore and across the waters.

As we feel that our comrades at large will be pleased to hear from us, we will tell you of how we are fixed and what we are doing:

The shingle mill will be in operation in a day or two.

We will soon build a good road to Edison, which is much needed.

The saw mill and planing mill are doing their best and have turned out some nice lumber.

We have a public bath room in one side of the laundry building, which is very convenient.

We are glad to welcome our new paper. Long may it live while fighting for the rights of the many.

We have quite a little library of books, and will soon have them properly shelved, and conveniently arranged.

We have made arrangements whereby we can receive our mail daily instead of every two or three days as formerly.

We are using some of the coarse sawdust to fill in a few of the bad places in the road from the kitchen to the barn.

The little boys are helping to pick up brush and keep the bonfires burning, as we are burning up the old stumps and trees.

Our new apartment house of 34x100 feet will soon be finished and will accommodate thirty families and fifty single men.

The spring near the apartment house is being enclosed in stone masonry, about a feet square and will also be roofed over. We hope soon to have in pipes to carry the water

to the kitchen. The other spring close by is boxed up with lumber.

—We have an apiary, but as yet it is small, only consisting of two hives. We shall endeavor to enlarge it in the future.

—Our shingle mill is hard at work and has already made some fine shingles. Now the apartment house can be finished in short order.

—Comrade Bridges, of the transportation department, still occasionally hauls another load of sawdust to put in some of the bad places.

—Our fishermen returned today with over 1,500 lbs of fish. They were mostly herring, and are fine eating. We salted down over two large barrels full.

—Let us all cheer for Equality Colony; and may the good work of the B. C. C. go on, until many more colonies are founded on the same socialistic principles.

—After the exercises were over the room was cleared, and as many as wished indulged in a social dance until about 10:30, when we started away well pleased.

—The manufacturing department have made some things in the way of furniture, such as beds and benches, and expect soon to make good shelving for our library books.

—The shoemaker is doing his level best, but we were glad to welcome last week as a new comer another shoemaker, as there is work for two or three men in that line.

—The blacksmith department is continually busy keeping the horses' feet in good condition; also the iron parts of the farming machinery and all work that comes in that line.

—Mrs. Beal came to the colony to make a permanent home here. Mr. Davis of Colorado also came this evening. We understand he has come to stay and is a baker by trade.

—The agricultural department are also very busy gardening, plowing, etc. The horses are busy in the transportation department about all the time, and they can all find plenty to do.

—The educational department is studying up that portion of the work; it will take some corresponding yet on the part of the colony secretary before all matters in that line can be settled.

—The Blanchard people kindly gave some of us an invitation to a dance to be held there on Saturday evening, but as it is the evening of our weekly meeting we were obliged to refuse.

—We will all be glad when we have our new road to Edison, the road we have now is bad and so round about. We hope soon to begin the new one. It will be a big step toward one reform at least.

—The sewing department is busy as usual, turning out some well finished garments. All articles for women and children are made; also shirts, overalls and jumpers for the men and boys.

—The nursery business is still on hand. We have planted over 3,500 trees, bushes, vines, etc., of many different varieties, including berries, cherries, apples and many others. We expect in a year or two to have plenty of fruit of our own raising.

—The members of the colony went to Edison to an entertainment given by some of the members who live in or near Edison. We enjoyed the entertainment and hope they will soon give another. The room was full of spectators, many of them being from the neighborhood about and from Blanchard.

—In the kitchen department of course all are very busy. In most of the departments they all realize that by the sweat of his brow shall man eat bread. And all the people here must be fed, so the kitchen department is kept pretty busy most of the time. There are about 120 people that are fed in this part of the colony, so let all honor be given to those in charge of that part of the work, as that is about the most necessary. Without that the rest of the work could not be done.

—The department of Education and Recreation, Equality colony, needs the addresses of educational periodicals (or better, the journals themselves) and catalogues of kindergarten supplies. Address Superintendent, Box 32, Edison, Wash.

BATTLE CREEK, Mich., April 18.—Prof. George D. Herron, the eminent sociological author, lectured on "The Democracy of Power," under the auspices of the B. C. C., at the Auditorium, in this city, on Monday evening, April 25.

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ASKED AND ANSWERED.

John Johnson's Questions and Our Replies.

Our very numerous correspondent, John Johnson, Everywhere P. O., U. S. A., is asking us a thousand and one questions about the Brotherhood and Equality colony and the town of Edison and the State of Washington and other cognate topics in which all our three thousand members are interested. In order that each of our thousand and one correspondents may get the benefit of whatever information we possess, we publish some of the questions that the secretary receives, together with our replies:

1. What is the address of the national headquarters?

Ans. Edison, Skagit county, Washington.

2. Where is the colony situated?

Ans. The first B. C. C. colony is situated at Equality (Edison postoffice), Skagit county, Washington, three miles from Edison.

3. How can I reach Equality?

Ans. Belfast, our nearest railroad station, is on the line of the Great Northern railway, five or six miles from Edison. A stage from Edison meets the northbound train at Belfast daily about noon; the stage fare is 50 cents, or four bits, in the local lingo. Persons coming over a route other than the Great Northern, may ticket to Seattle and transfer to Great Northern depot, ticketing there to Belfast; or they may come by steamer from Seattle to New Whatcom (15 miles from Edison), and thence reach Edison by way of Belfast over the Great Northern southbound train, or take steamer May Queen (whose trips depend on tides and are in consequence irregular) from New Whatcom to Edison wharf.

4. What is your nearest express office?

Ans. Belfast, Washington.

5. Who are the national officers of the B. C. C., and where do they reside?

Ans. President, Rev. Myron W. Reed, Denver, Colorado; Secretary, N. W. Lermond, Edison, Skagit county, Washington; Treasurer, Miss Helen M. Mason, Edison; Organizer, Rev. Geo. Candee, 1617 Detroit avenue, Toledo, Ohio; Dean, Professor Frank Parsons, Boston, Mass.; Editor, Rev. W. H. Kaufman, Edison; Master Workman, Chas. H. Swigart, Edison; Distributer, E. F. Nolan, Edison.

6. Are you now taking in members who wish to be allowed to work out their membership fee in the colony?

Ans. We are not now in a position to receive any into colony membership, that have not the \$100 fee in cash. We trust that we shall soon be in a position to accept ALL good Socialists, and to allow them to pay their fee in co-operative labor in Equality or some other colony of the B. C. C.; but at present our resources are too limited to permit us to be as liberal as we would like to be.

7. I have an aged mother, a wife, and three children; will the payment of one fee of one hundred and sixty dollars admit all of us?

Ans. Yes; the payment of a single full membership fee admits to membership at Equality all those who properly constitute one family. But where there are any adults in the family, other than the husband and wife, and they are able to pay the fee, it is expected that they shall do so.

8. Is the colony publishing a paper?

Ans. The national organ of the Brotherhood is being published at Edison, and is called "INDUSTRIAL FREEDOM"; the colony as such is not publishing a paper, but it is fully represented in the Brotherhood paper. We should like our readers of this first number of the B. C. C. journal, to let us know whether THEY think we ARE publishing a paper, and incidentally, to tell us what they think about THEIR paper.

9. What is your religion at Equality, and do you have religious exercises?

Ans. The colony has no religion; in this it is strikingly similar to the United States, which government, also, is not a religious body. Some of the members of Equality community have a denominational religion, and others have not; but the colony as such does not deal in denominations, the fullest freedom in matters of dogma and creed being left to every individual. Whenever any of the individual members wish to follow any form of religious worship, they are at liberty, as individuals and in the same manner as citizens of the United States throughout the country, to follow their own private convictions in their own private affairs. We have no religious question here, any more than we have a dress question, or a diet question.

10. How is your climate at Equality? Doesn't it rain a great deal there?

Ans. Our geographical position is on the east or sheltered side of Puget sound, between the coast range and the Cascades; we have, therefore, a two-fold advantage in that (1) the temperature is mild and equable, almost to the extent of a typically marine climate, while on the other hand (2) we have a much smaller precipitation of rain and a much greater amount of sunshine than in the region nearer the Pacific coast, on the west side of the coast range. The climate in the western part of Skagit county is very mild in summer and very mild in winter; we have few very cold days and very few hot days. The evenness of the temperature is remarkable; its annual average is about 50°, ranging from about 35° for the coldest month (December) to 60° for the warmest month (July or August). "To the newcomer the unexpected warm winter of the Washington coast or Sound regions," says the official report of the State Board of Statistics, "is a genuine surprise, especially to one who has lived in the same, or even a lower, latitude in some part of the country east of the Rocky mountains or east of the Mississippi. He contrasts the mildness of the winters with the severity of those he has formerly experienced, and can hardly account for the difference and for the absence of blizzards and severe cold waves. This uniformity and equability of temperature is due to the fact that the prevalent winds are from off the Pacific ocean; as it is well known, on account of that peculiar property of water which gives it a high "specific heat," the temperature of the sea changes but little, and winds blowing from off the ocean bear its temperature with them. The effect is intensified on the Washington coast, because the part of the Pacific ocean contiguous is traversed by the warm Japan current. The warmth and moisture cause grass, flowers and various kinds of vegetation to grow the winter through. That the same cause which makes the winters mild and warm, should make the summers mild and cool, savors of the paradoxical, yet it is strictly true; namely, the blowing of winds from off a large body of water which has a great specific heat, and cannot, therefore, be overheated like a large body of land. Therefore very few hot days occur in summer."

The general notion is that the rainfall in this section is very excessive, but such an idea is erroneous and arises usually out of the mistaken assumption that, since it is so rainy on the immediate Pacific coast, it must be very wet in western Skagit county. A reference, however, to the rainfall records of this neighborhood will readily disabuse our minds of this notion. The observed and recorded annual precipitation of rain in the vicinity of Equality for the nearest official stations, is as follows: Anacortes 21 inches, Olga 24, Stillaguamish 32, and West Ferndale 32. These were the figures for 1895, which was a very dry year; the more usual annual average for our section would be from 40 to 50 inches.

We have a great many cloudy days in the wet season, and the clear nights in the spring are apt to be very chilly and frosty; these two features are the only disagreeable ones in a climate that is, as a whole, very healthful and very delightful.

11. "I don't know that I thoroughly understand that scrip business. Could colonies exchange with L. E. branches for products needed but not produced by the Brotherhood?"

Ans. The scrip system of the B. C. C. is a good deal like the L. E. check system, the essential features of both being identical. It is altogether probable that an arrangement will be made by which B. C. C. scrip and L. E. checks will be interchangeable, the former being received for Labor Exchange products and the latter being a good and sufficient tender for the product of the colonies of the Brotherhood. The B. C. C. is now purchasing in large quantities from the Labor Exchange at Whatcom; it will aim to buy the L. E. and other people's co-operative articles everywhere in preference to the products of capitalistic competitors; and it is anticipated that the industrial and commercial relations of the L. E. and B. C. C. will, as these organizations progress, become more and more reciprocal and advantageous.

12. "Can one pay his colony fee in installments by the month?"

Ans. Members of the Brotherhood can join the list of colony "reserves" and pay their fee in installments, weekly or monthly, of such amounts as they can afford; we have hundreds of members on the reserve list, paying their fee in that manner. When the total amount has been paid in, the Secretary of the B. C. C. will issue the member a passport or certificate, and the colony selected is then ready to receive the member on probation at any time thereafter that he may choose to come. On the expiration of six months after the new member's entry into the colony, the general assembly of the colony passes upon his fitness for permanent membership, and if two-thirds of the members vote for his acceptance and retention, he is adopted as a permanent member of the colony. No good industrious Socialist need have the least fear as to the result of this vote on his application for permanent membership, for Socialists of the proper kind are even yet too rare for any colony to reject them. If, when an applicant comes to be voted on for permanent membership, he should be rejected, the money paid in by him for a membership fee will be returned to him, out of the Brotherhood funds.

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