

Llano in Louisiana

AS THIS is being written, just before New Year's Day, the population of the little town of Stables, Louisiana, has grown to more than three hundred. This has happened virtually all within two months. The practical application of Socialist principles through the co-operative plan has invaded the "Solid South."

Following the arrival of Comrade Harriman and George Deutsch came the publications force by train. After them came five auto loads from California, big, husky men, who made a record run from Llano, California, to the new Colony holding in Western Louisiana. Then came the special train with 130 persons, men, women and children. From many points in the South, families are moving to the new Llano del Rio Co-operative Colony in the Highlands of Louisiana.

Other auto loads are coming from California, braving the inclement weather and the hardships. Colonists who have been out of the Colony for various reasons are dropping in from widely-separated points. Nearly every day there is a reunion of old Colony comrades.

But the new people are mostly Texans—honest, hard-working folks—eager to enjoy the benefits of complete co-operation, glad to leave the individual farms and join with their comrades in the inspiring enterprise being conducted for the good of all and not for private greed or gain.

Not less frequently than every three days, and sometimes much oftener, a car is placed on the switch which is on Colony property. These cars contain cattle, horses, mules, farm implements, corn, peanuts ("goobers" they call them here), sweet potatoes, household goods, and industrial machinery.

They are unloaded onto our own platforms and sheds.

NO TRANSPORTATION PROBLEM

The old bug-bear at Llano, and one of the most serious and costly problems with which the Colony had to contend, was transportation. Cars were unloaded at the station twenty miles away and the goods hauled in trucks across the desert. It was an extortionate price that was paid, even under the happiest of conditions, and the condition of most desert roads is not one to induce a high degree of happiness.

But in the new Colony, conditions are different. Cars consigned to the Llano del Rio Colony are set in on the switch and go direct into the Colony's warehouse. No time is lost. The materials and household goods go under cover immediately, there are no demurrage charges, and a big force of men is instantly available if required to move heavy machinery. There is no friction, no lost time, little expense. Hauling need not be done immediately if more urgent work presses. The saving is incalculable, and one of the first things that impresses itself on the incoming colonist from California is the tremendous economy of the arrangement here.

But this is only half the advantage. The Llano del Rio Company expects to be a very heavy shipper of goods at all times and especially during the summer. Even this first season, many cars of Llano products will go forward from here. This is not prophecy or dream, but the plan now made and already being actively put into operation. With the switch and the warehouse and the platform right here in the front yard, so to speak, the shipping costs are enormously re-

duced. This means more economy. Those who come to the Colony can have their goods shipped through and unloaded at Stables, Louisiana. All are being advised to do this.

The economy of transportation leads to another great economy, and one which will impress every person who ever lived in Llano, or who ever visited there.

HOUSING MADE EASY

In Llano there were times, and the times were of frequent occurrence, when the housing problem was the paramount question. Industries had to be stopped while men were put to providing shelter. When large numbers of visitors came unexpectedly, it meant great distress to the hotel, for there was never sufficient accommodations. Arrivals at the railroad station twenty miles away, had to be brought to the Colony. It meant additional trouble to the hotel management or the housing committee.

But when the 16,000 acre tract in the Highlands of Louisiana was purchased, a town was also bought. The amount of lumber saved and labor saved and expense saved amounts to thousands of dollars, more thousands than would be believed if the sum were put into print. But some calculation may be made when it is remembered that with this land came a commodious hotel which will accommodate, if compelled to,

more than sixty people, though perhaps not with entire comfort to so many. It is well-built. The office building is sufficient to house the executive, sales, and accounting departments. The commissary is a large building, in good condition, well-located, and with shelving and counters already installed. It is a better building than any at Llano, California, just as the hotel is

a better one than the Llano hotel, and the offices here are better than those at Llano. This is not intended to be derogative of Llano, but to show to some degree the immense advantages gained here at no additional outlay, and at no expense for labor and materials.

That is not all. One large white house which will be used as doctor's offices and probably as library, is a building such as would cost not less than \$4000 in many parts of California. There are scores of two-three- and four-room houses in which colonists are being housed. These take care of the first comers. They are all under roof. No large force of men must be diverted to this work. No huge sums must be expended for materials. No valuable time is taken that should be used for other purposes. The advantages of a ready-made town located on the railroad are many.

But even this is not all. There are industries to be housed. The obstacle that retarded the development of this feature at Llano more than any other was housing. But in the extension Colony there is no such difficulty. The vast warehouses which were acquired with the new property make excellent industrial buildings. A comparatively small force of men can remodel portions as needed to take care of the incoming industries. Some of the sheds are being torn down and the lumber carefully piled for future use.

Long platforms, some of them several hundred yards in length, made of two-inch planks, the width of the platforms being usually about twelve feet, are spread in many directions.

To Our Readers: Owing to the delay incident to the move from California to Louisiana, it is impossible to print the December number of the WESTERN COMRADE. We are combining the December and January numbers. Subscribers will also note the increase in size of the magazine, which we hope will compensate for the number missed.—

The Editors.

Much of this lumber is available for building purposes, and that which is useful for no other purpose, still serves as fuel, close at hand and partly prepared for the stoves. These platforms are high from the ground, and the supporting trestle work is still another great supply of lumber. It is estimated that the amount of lumber in the industrial buildings and the sheds will total close to two million feet.

UTILIZING THESE BUILDINGS

First to be made ready for use was the hotel, which required some repairs. Then the houses were put into repair. A large force was employed just before the train from California arrived. There are still many to be repaired and cleaned and made habitable, but this is no longer pressing work. An old repair shed has been remodeled into a cow barn. It is not ideal for this purpose, but a comparatively small amount of work made it practicable and it will be used for a long time. The saving in time, labor, and money has advanced the dairy industry immeasurably because of the ease with which it could be accomplished.

Two long sheds, built of good lumber, and the lumber still in excellent condition, are not suitable for any colony use and are being torn down as the material is required.



Unloading Baggage from the special train from California Colony.

Already a lumber yard is being established, and in it will be piled materials of all kinds. It is more than a lumber yard, being more of a material yard. A competent man in charge will see that the lumber is cared for and only those entitled to it are permitted to use it.

One entire side of the warehouse nearest the railroad, the one which is to be used as a shipping shed and warehouse, has been walled off for use by the publishing department. Here the machinery is installed and in operation, with plenty of space so that the workers may make the best of their effort. There is plenty of space allowed, too, for expansion. The membership department and the publications offices are together, attached in the front of the new print shop. Conditions are already much improved over the conditions in Llano and work is carried on with a much greater production record.

The greatest building of all, the one that would hold every building that was erected in Llano, with the exception of the tent houses (this is no exaggeration), is to be used for housing the industries. They will be placed under the same roof until other arrangements can be made. Several are now operating, and others are expected.

INDUSTRIES HERE AND COMING

Though the time since the new extension colony was first opened is short, the record is long and satisfying. The lessons learned at Llano, the ability developed, the men who came from there, the industries shipped in, the knowledge gained—all these contributed and are still contributing to quick results. Not the sort of quick results not based on sound foundations, but the sort of quick results that are quick because the planning has been careful and the preparation thorough.

The publications are here, housed, operating. A saw mill has arrived, is unloaded, and will be erected when it is deemed advisable to do so. The shoe shop is here, packed in boxes it is true, but ready to be set up and operated whenever this becomes advisable. A machine shop and blacksmith shop is here and operating. Another one will come from California. A vulcanizing shop is in running order and doing business. The commissary is well-stocked and business is increasing. All the machinery of administration is in order and running more smoothly than ever before and efficiency is high, with an ever-upward tendency. The hotel is well-ordered, well-kept, satisfactory. The dairy is rapidly acquiring a good herd of milk cows. Some hens are here and the poultry department will be established as soon as possible. A tool shop is operating with a competent tool man in charge, one who has spent most of his active life in sharpening and handling tools. The hog department is making a start. The butcher shop is already operating, and has plans for extending its work rapidly. The slaughter house will soon be ready, and then there will be an invasion of outside markets. The baker is here, and by the time this is in the hands of the readers he will doubtless be equipped for work. At any rate, it will not be long before he is ready for business. He expects to sell his products to the "outside" as well as to supply the Colony. The making of sausage will be taken up as an industry at the same time.

A barber chair is installed, but is not operated regularly, as yet.

AN INDUSTRIAL "LOOK AHEAD"

The cannery must be installed as soon as possible, for the possibilities along the line of selling canned goods are immense. The planing mill will be sent from Llano. With it in action, the making of furniture can be taken up as soon as other work permits. When the machine shop is also here and erected, this Colony will have as fine a machine shop as is to be found in many a city of much greater size. The rabbit industry will be continued here and with the improved conditions should be placed on a paying basis very soon. The same is true of every department of the livestock industry.

The manufacturing and industrial possibilities flow naturally from the livestock and agricultural resources here. There are hundreds of acres of good hardwood timber. Out of this fact grows logically the development of industries in which hardwoods are used, and foremost among them is obviously the making of furniture. This calls for skilled woodworkers, and those who follow this craft will come to the Colony.

The readiness with which certain vegetables are grown here is assurance that the canning industry can be established and made to pay handsome dividends from the very first year, to pay for the outlay for machinery, and to do more than that. This, of course, becomes one of the foremost industries and is likely to remain among the first. Definite plans are being made now to establish the cannery. The Colony has a competent canner to handle the work, one who knows the business from top to bottom.

Grass grows luxuriantly everywhere. Where grass grows, stock can be raised at a minimum cost. Out of this grows the meat industry, dairying, and tanning. With the making of

leather, comes the probability of a shoe factory, especially when the Colony already owns shoe machinery. There are good harness makers connected with the Colony, too.

Cotton is one of the chief crops which can be produced. The ginning industry, the compressor, the oil industry are all suggested as first manufactures logically following. But the thinking person will ask, "Why not the cloth-making industry, and, following that, the making of clothes?" And it seems quite logical to believe it may follow in the due course of time.

These are not prophecies. They are merely suggestions. What will be done depends on many things—the initiative of the Colonists quite as much as any other feature. But they are certainly all things that might be done, and some are things that must be done. The preserving of fruits and food stuffs is imperative. It must be taken up in all of its branches. The marketing of products is quite as necessary, and this must be taken up, which means that the Colony will of necessity embark in the packing and shipping industry at no distant date.

The active, enthusiastic, constructive mind will leap ahead and see many enterprises in the future. The possibilities seem limitless. There is nothing that appears to be fantastic about the suggestions listed above, and of their practicability no

Colony is proceeding on ascertained facts, piloted by experienced men, working along lines proved correct.

"HOW DO WE KNOW YOU KNOW?"

One of the features of the new Colony is the rigid investigation of the plans, genuine knowledge, and ability to lead of those who aspire for positions of authority or are placed in them. The effort is to find out what the man knows, how thoroughly he knows it, what experience he has had, how successful he has been. The man who thinks he knows must give place to the man who knows he knows and has demonstrated it and can demonstrate it. The Colony is a fine place for experimenters, and all will be encouraged to experiment, but this experimentation must not be at the colony expense. This is a decision rigidly adhered to. The examination through which foremen are put is perfectly fair, but it is also exhaustive in its questioning. The man who passes it has to know or he will not be able to pass. Other tests are also applied to determine whose theories are practical and whose are not.

The man who knows has his opportunity. The man who thinks he knows has his. The man who pretends to know but does not, also has his. It is fair and just to all, but the interests of the Colony are foremost in every instance. In answering the question, "How do we know you know?" they must disclose whether their knowledge is genuine or whether it is merely a figment of an ambitious but impractical mind. Of course the question is not bluntly stated. It is a series of questions that bring out a series of facts. But the upshot of it all is, as stated above, "How do we know you know?"

So much for the farming. Progress is being made, but at this early date that is about as definite as the statement can be made. Later, facts and figures and photos will be given that will be convincing. Competent men are leading and planning and they are working to a definite plan in a country where they know what the standard is and what can be done. Results should be fairly certain.

ENTHUSIASM EVERYWHERE

One of the finest things is the splendid enthusiasm that is manifested everywhere. Never did things move with such expedition as they are now, and never was the standard so high. Achievements are demanded.

Every visitor is impressed with the organization, the physical characteristics of the property, the splendid class of people in the Colony, the marvelous resources and the grand possibilities. So well impressed are they that most of them make up their minds to come into the Colony and work with their comrades here in the practical application of the principles of Socialism.

Among the most enthusiastic are the colonists who came from California. They know the wonders that will come out of co-operation, and when they see the Colony making the strides it is making, when they see the efficient methods and the complete organization that is being effected, when they see the wealth of buildings, and the abundance of firewood, and are convinced of the fertility of the soil, their enthusiasm is boundless. They are able to see these things more plainly, perhaps, because of their experience at Llano where they worked under such trying conditions and under such handicaps, where so many things were impossible that are immediately possible here.

The speed with which work is carried on, the records of achievement that are demanded and made—these keep enthusiasm mounting higher and higher.

BUT WHAT ABOUT LLANO ?

This is the question that is coming in the letters.

Llano is still Llano, still in California, and will be developed

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Train of six coaches on which 150 Colonists came from the Llano to the Louisiana Colony in December.

doubt exists. But no promises are made. No definite statements are made as to when or where they will be established.

AGRICULTURE FIRST

The order of work laid out is about as follows: First, the emergency housing of men, materials, industries, animals; second, the development of agriculture. Both are going ahead. It was impossible to spare men for agricultural work until almost the first of January, but from that time on more and more men and children will be drafted into the farming department. Agriculture is the dominant necessity. It takes precedence over all else. It is the foundation of prosperity and progress.

Plans are definite. The work this year will be confined to certain crops known to be prolifically productive and highly remunerative. Gardening will of course be carried on to the extent necessary to provide for home wants, and as much else as can be produced. But most of the effort will be placed on the big market crops. The warehouse is already well filled with peanuts, cotton seed, sweet potatoes, and other seeds. Some ribbon cane will be put out this season. There may perhaps be some rice. But sweet potatoes, cotton, corn, peanuts, and melons will have the right-of-way over all other crops. What they will produce is definitely known, and it is also known just how we will be able to handle them. The

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along slightly different lines than were at one time anticipated. Because of conditions, it has been deemed best to concentrate on the fruit industry there. A sufficient number of colonists will reside in Llano to develop the fruit. They will plant trees, cultivate, irrigate. They will have their community life and will carry on the work there and continue the work made possible by the colonists who are now transferring to Louisiana.

There will be fewer persons in Llano, California, and the work will be less complicated. Smaller communities demand less administrative machinery. The population there will not vary much in numbers. In Louisiana the population will be increasing rapidly, and the administrative machinery must be constantly adjusted to meet this growth.

Considered from every angle, the Llano del Rio Colony in Louisiana is an inspiring enterprise, and those who are here as colonists have the enthusiasm that comes from accomplishment. Visitors catch the contagion of enthusiasm because they, too, see into the future along the lines of the material wealth held by the Colony. It requires but little imagination to see what the Colony can be made here with the magnificent resources that a generous Nature has bequeathed to this region.