

## THE GOLDEN GEESE

(Written by Horace Brown for the December issue of "Ontario Hydro News")

Early in 1931, a devout Kitchener man resolved to follow the ways of the early Christians, living not for personal gain but for the common good. He was joined by his wife, one other adult, and three children.

The little group took stock of its assets: 200 pullets, a half-interest in an old, lame horse, and some very modest household chattels. The man, Julius Kubassek, went to a dresser drawer, opened it, took out the entire cash resources: six cents.

But Brother Julius (as he is now known) and his "brothers and sisters" had the courage of their convictions. After an unsuccessful venture in Western Canada they returned to Ontario. Since 1941, the Community Farm of the Brethren, at Bright, near Galt, Ontario, has grown to 1,200 acres, which embrace four completely-electrified farms. Believed to be the largest pedigreed goose farm in North America, it "belongs" equally to all members of the brotherhood... 12 adult males, 14 adult females, and 28 minors.

The Farm is truly a community in itself, with its own religious services, school, and a volunteer fire department. Spiritually devout and of simple tastes, the members of the unique community have, nonetheless, a lively interest in world affairs.

While Brother Julius is the nominal leader of the community, it is stressed that there are no leaders in the accepted sense of the word. Decisions are made by the "Council," composed of the adult members of the group, and the council's decision must be almost unanimous.

The unique community is particularly noted for its geese - variously known as "Baby Goose" and "Brethren's goose." The flock was started with the eight geese the Brethren brought with them from western Canada when they returned east in 1940. After 17 years of patient experimentation they have bred what is smilingly and justifiably referred to as their "trade secret"... a goose that is long, deep and meaty in the breast, and low on fat content. While it has taken nearly two decades to bring this specimen of the poultry world to the present state of near-perfection, the Brethren are still not satisfied that their continual cross-breeding and selection have produced the ultimate in goose, and the study is continuing. But meanwhile they are doing a brisk business, and many a tasty bird from the Farm graced Christmas tables this year.

The Farm maintains a flock of some 10,000 of these celebrated geese although some 8,000 are marketed annually. The supply cannot begin to meet the demand, however, and the Brethren are considering expanding their poultry flock. Other breeders in many parts of North America, as well as poultry-men in the West Indies,

purchase some 8,000 to 9,000 day-old goslings annually, receiving their purchases via air express.

The goose provides many-by-products on this farm too. The sisters of the colony "put up" some 400 packages of egg noodles each week, while their goose-feather pillows, another important source of revenue, are in great demand.

Although the honking of geese is almost constant at this farm, the lowing of cattle is equally common. A herd of 70 purebred Holsteins, providing milk for shipment, as well as several beef cattle, are included in this livestock "population." In fact it is truly a "mixed farm" with some 200 acres in wheat and 300 acres in assorted grains, while 200 acres are devoted to hay, alfalfa and grass and 175 acres to summer fallow.

Indispensable handmaiden of the communal group is electricity. When Ontario Hydro News visited the community recently, Brothers Andrew and Julius, Jr., were busy installing one of the few three-phase wiring systems to be found on an Ontario farm.

### 100 ITEMS ALTERED

During the summer, Ontario Hydro's frequency standardization crews moved in to find nearly 100 frequency-sensitive items to alter for operation at 60 cycles.

"It would be literally impossible to operate our farm without electricity," said Brother Julius, Sr. "While we have many hands to make light work, we find that Hydro adds hundreds of hands to help in fulfilling our daily tasks."

The important goose-raising operation is mainly electrical, beginning with the incubation of the egg, and ending with the packaging and fast-freezing of the famous "Baby Goose," a process, incidentally, that, year after year, has won several top prizes at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, Toronto.

Four incubators hold between 13,000 and 14,000 eggs. During the four-week incubation period, the temperature is thermostatically-controlled, while humidity is maintained at approximately 88 per cent.

The electric incubators replaced Mother Nature there after 1949, when the Brethren had to find 240 "broody hens" to sit placidly on the eggs their geese were ignoring. This meant a frantic scouring of the countryside, and much expense. Since that time, while the initial outlay per incubator is about \$3,000, the electric "maternity ward" has proven more economical and a better parental risk, producing a higher yield of goslings than the natural method.

The workshop is also a source of pride for the mechanically-inclined Brothers, containing