

## Community Building

By J. S. Woodworth, Secretary Canadian Welfare League

Both by birth and by training, Canadians are individuals. They come of specially selected stock. Their forefathers were hardy pioneers who left the old-world communities and fared forth to battle single-handed with the hostile forces of the unconquered wilderness. Those of United Empire Loyalist blood represent still another sifting which separated a few sturdy independents and cast them into the inhospitable northern wilds. There they grew and flourished. From their descendants we gathered the adventurous spirits who did the early pioneer work of the great West.

Yes, specially selected stock, and then, rigorous training. In the early days every man had to shift for himself. There was no room for weaklings. Each man had developed to the utmost all his initiative and resource. Listen to the story of an Ontario pioneer. With his axe on his shoulder he pushed his way into the "forest primeval," cutting down a few trees, he made them into a log hut. Cutting down a few more he made and fenced a little clearing and there planted his first crop. He now returned to civilization for his wife, and they two, and the children who were given them, gradually transformed the wolf-infested forest into a comfortable farm home.

They had need of little outside help. An occasional "barn-raising" or "quilting-bee" were about the only events that brought the neighbors to their assistance. The school at "the Corners," the village grist-mill, the little meeting-house, largely sufficed for the simple community needs.

Among people living under such conditions, independence was exalted into a virtue. "Paddle your own canoe" was the advice given to the young man as he went out from the parental roof. This individualistic position even received a theological sanction. In order to save his own precious soul, "Christian" was warned to leave his companions and flee from the City of Destruction.

But times have changed. Now no man lives or can live unto himself. We are gradually learning that we are members one of another. We are all in the same boat. No man any longer can paddle his own canoe. We must pull together or sink together. In modern life, independence once a virtue, has become the greatest barrier to social progress. The modern Christian has been granted a vision of the Holy City coming down out of heaven. His job is not to flee into the wilderness but to stay and clean up the back lanes of his own city and make it the best residential district in the Kingdom of God.

Life to-day is socially organized. In Ontario the farmers use Niagara Falls to milk their cows. In the city, all the people use the Winnipeg river to light their houses. Let something go wrong with the electrical machinery and the Winnipeg people sit in darkness, while the Ontario cows have a very uncomfortable experience. Let there come a fluctuation in the London markets, and the farmers alike in Siberia, in the Argentine, and in Saskatchewan receive so many cents a bushel more or less, and buy, or are forced to go without, a parlor carpet or the wife's new dress. The world has become like a spider's web. Touch one strand, and the whole vibrates.

In the new social order, everything depends upon effective co-operation. This is precisely the point in which Canadians are weak. They haven't yet learned the value of team play. They continue to "hog" the ball, and wonder why after all their efforts and brilliant dodges, the score is against them. The secret? Lack of combination! Independence as an ideal, must give place to interdependence.

"Everybody's business is nobody's business" is a proverb that has come out of the bitter experience of a society in which individualism is rampant. Country cemeteries neglected, roads impassable, school yards over-run with weeds, city franchises the prey of exorbitant

corporations, politics a "dirty mess"—and so it will be until the old proverb is relegated to the scrap-heap and we hang up the shining new motto "Everybody's business is each body's business." When in reality, "the welfare of each is the concern of all" we have entered upon the new day.

Co-operation is particularly difficult if our Western communities which are made up of people from all parts of the world, and differing often in social customs, in religion, and even in language. Geographically we have become neighbors. In sympathy, we are often still living at opposite poles. How get together?

That is perhaps the greatest problem that confronts our Western communities. How build up a community spirit? From the economic standpoint, we can never attain our maximum prosperity or even successfully defend ourselves from exploitation, until we learn to co-operate. From the social standpoint, life in a small community is unattractive enough, and becomes unbearable if race prejudices and petty jealousies are allowed to persist. From the standpoint of true religion, how can love to God and man be developed in an atmosphere of suspicion and rivalry and schism?

Our unhappy divisions! But they may be healed. They are after all, so far as

we are concerned, merely accidental. The fact that one man was born a Scotch Presbyterian doesn't make it impossible for him to become a good neighbor to another man born an Irish Methodist. Ignorance and prejudice and insularity are overcome by getting together, working together, and playing together.

Here is the need for the community center. This may be and perhaps should be, a special building. Some day, it will be the finest building or group of buildings in the community. The property of all the people, for the use of all the people. But after all, the building is of secondary importance. The development of a community spirit is the great thing.

Every truly enterprising business man, every wide-awake farmer, every progressive minister, every far-seeing school teacher, every advocate of the woman's movement should constitute himself a community secretary in his own community. Then as the boosters say—watch us grow!

In one little Western town a football ground became a true community centre from which later there emanated various helpful activities.

In several towns in Canada "Community Secretaries" are employed, whose sole business is to discover and develop community resources, and to promote community activity.

In a town in Saskatchewan a group of young people began studying their local problems. They enlarged their group into a really representative Social Service League. This League was able

to promote various community enterprises—a municipal skating rink was opened, a disreputable saloon closed, the poor were systematically cared for; one of the public school teachers was set aside by the public school board to teach the adult foreigners the English language; the ministers of the various local churches were drawn into sympathetic relations and co-operation.

In the suburb of an Eastern Canadian city, a denominational brotherhood began to realize the wider needs and possibilities of the neighborhood. A Community Council was formed, on which were representative of all denominations and parties and interests. Within a few months, even a staid, reactionary old councilman got out with his rake on "clean-up day" and did his share in tidying up the streets and vacant lots. A little later, when the first playgrounds were opened, the suburb turned out en masse. Even the adjacent city came to see. Now, plans are being laid for extensive improvements that will make Fairville a thoroughly desirable residential district.

Community building is a serious and delicate task. Thrown together a heterogeneous mass of material—how put it together to form one harmonious and purposeful whole? Surely the call is for a master-builder! But our material is not dead stuff, but living personalities already richly endowed by some master-builder with instincts which impel them to take their proper place in the social organism. We need but remove the obstacles, and they will come together—each into his own place.

## 10,000 FARMERS WANTED

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We want every farmer in Canada that contemplates using Corrugated Iron, Metal Shingles or any other Sheet Metal Building Materials, to write us at once for information of our new co-operative plan by which we are supplying the farmers of Canada with Sheet Metal Building Materials at the lowest possible cost.

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We guarantee the galvanized iron used in the manufacture of Sarnia Metal Products to be equal to that of any iron used by any manufacturer in Canada in the manufacture of similar lines of roofing products which they are selling to the farmer, at the time of advertising, at an advance of 25 to 50 per cent above the price we are quoting. And please remember that all Sarnia Metal Products are made from galvanized iron of a quality specified by the organized farmers themselves.

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By an agreement with the farm organizations we have agreed to supply all farmers with sheet metal building materials at a small percentage in advance of the cost of our raw materials, leaving the control of the selling price in the farmers' hands. We have estimated our profits on a very large volume of business and every order you send us will help in making our price still lower.

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Our factory at Sarnia, just completed, is the most modern factory in Canada for the manufacture of the lines we offer, and we carry such large stocks and are situated in such an advantageous location that it is possible for us to make the quickest possible delivery of orders.

### A VITAL QUESTION

If approached by another company or its agent in an endeavor to sell you Corrugated Iron, etc., simply ask them what they would supply you the same material for, if it were not for the Sarnia Metal Products Co., Limited, and its co-operative plan. We have some information in regard to the plan used in the endeavor of others to head off our business, which proves very interesting reading.

If you contemplate the erection of any new buildings or the re-roofing of any already built, please send us a rough sketch and we will do the rest.

WRITE AT ONCE TO HEAD OFFICE

**The Sarnia Metal Products Co. Limited**  
SARNIA CANADA

Our lines are sold and distributed through the United Farmers Co-operative Company, of Ontario