

Co-Operation vs. Competition

It may at first seem superfluous and almost absurd to preface a mere series of memoranda about co-operation with any explanation of the grounds upon which that co-operation is carried forward, but there are many reasons which excuse this ceremony on the present occasion. The people to whom these lines are addressed, it is hoped, may in time become a part of the great organization known as the United Coal, Iron and Lumber Corporation. If they have given the principles of co-operation serious thought, it is proof positive that they are not entirely satisfied with conditions at present prevailing in the worlds of commerce and industry, and are turning to new fields, hoping therein to find a remedy for the ills affecting our social system.

Co-operation is a principle which, if rightly applied, will do this; it will in time be the only principle on which commercial and industrial enterprises will rest. As competition was supplanted by consolidation, consolidation must in the course of time be supplanted by co-operation. There is no retrogression in nature. Each stage of evolution has been marked by an upward tendency. Through easy stages we have passed from one condition to another, all the way along the weary road leading from barbarism to the present day high civilization. No hand could stay the onward march in the past; no hand can arrest the upward tendency of to-day. UNIVERSAL CO-OPERATION is inevitable. It is a condition to which WE MUST BOW; therefore it behooves every thinking man to turn his thoughts out of the old channels of habit and revel in the new.

Many, many thousands have already done so. If you are one of the many thousands, you are one of the people who above all other desires, cherish that of understanding fully the motives and methods of co-operative work even to the slightest detail. And as such a person, we wish you to read the following letter which we have addressed to the members of the United Coal, Iron and Lumber Corporation. For the moment we desire you to consider yourself a part of our organization, and to appreciate the motives and method of unity of action we are inculcating in the minds of our co-workers.

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE UNITED COAL, IRON AND LUMBER CORPORATION:

Gentlemen:—
There is no perfect knowledge nor practice upon a large scale that has not first been learned upon a small, and he cannot contribute to true unity in great and far spreading service who has not learned to practice it in minute things. There must be order in every work, the order and discipline of responsibility judiciously distributed, faithfully recognized and clearly limited.

A co-operative corporation may be compared to a great engine of polish, steel and brass, capable of generating power sufficient in volume to turn the machinery of the largest factory, or push with express train speed mighty ships through storms and stress of weather over ocean speedways. So long as perfect unity of action exists in every detail of its mechanism, from its smallest bolt to the quickly revolving fly-wheel, there is a movement of placidly harmonious co-operation. The engine supplies the power of a thousand horses, but let discord creep in through a misplaced screw, a slightly bent bar or an improperly placed plate, then all is jangled and out of tune, and until harmony in the form of action is restored, the product of the machine's skill is, for all practical purposes, no more valuable than its weight in old and rusty iron.

The United Coal, Iron and Lumber Corporation is a machine; its members are screws and bolts and bars and wheels; each part is counted upon to do its work in maintaining perfect unity, and in so doing assist in generating the power necessary to bring about a happier condition in the commercial and industrial world. Therefore, we wish to impress every member of the United Coal, Iron and Lumber Corporation with the importance of work, work, work, sincere and never flagging. We wish to awaken within him a feeling of responsibility.

Every blessing enjoyed by man to-day is the result of ceaseless toil on the part of a few self-sacrificing souls who, through their devotion to the welfare of man, have brought out of chaos a condition of affairs nearly approaching order.

The struggle in England began 180 years ago, before education was general. At that time the minds of most men lay dormant. To-day you live in an age when practically every man, woman and child in civilized countries can read and write and reason. You are as well equipped intellectually to become a leader in a great movement, having for its purpose the general welfare of man, as were many of the leaders of 180, 150 or 100 years ago.

They possessed nothing which you cannot possess—"enthusiasm." The leaders of 100 years ago had a dull, deadened intellect in deal with. You have a people to deal with who have enjoyed the advantages of modern education and the refining influence of modern society. The distinction between classes is as great to-day as it was then. The condition of society, though, has generally improved. The leaders of 180 years ago lifted their fellow men out of a condition almost swine-like; they did it, but not alone. They accomplished the great work through co-operation. They had to pry upon the minds of men and let in the light of reason, and so recruit their followers. It was a tedious work, but they performed it nobly and well.

The perfect knowledge and practice upon a large scale we have to-day was learned upon this small beginning. It paved the way for more ambitious endeavor, which gradually extended into far spreading service.

As a member of the United Coal, Iron and Lumber Corporation, we want you to realize your power, your responsibility.

The first should be exerted to its utmost in familiarizing your friends, your neighbors with the aims and purpose of the organization of which you are a part. We then want you to realize that you, and you alone, are responsible for the corporation's growth within the range of your own influence, even though that range of influence does not extend beyond your own home.

In recognizing this responsibility and in faithfully performing your duty, you are adding to the wealth of the corporation. In failing to realize this, and neglecting to perform your duty, a duty you have a right to expect every other member of the organization to perform, you are not only failing to add to the wealth of the corporation, but in participating in the profits of the corporation you are detracting your co-workers out of that which is a right of justice, belongs to the earnest and sincere toiler alone.

We want you to be a leader in your community, remembering always that perfect knowledge and practice upon a large scale is learned upon the small. If you commence with only the members of your own household and convert them to the principles of co-operation, and they, when converted, religiously perform their duty as you have performed yours, you will not only be rewarded with the consciousness of having faithfully and well performed the part allotted to you, but in the wealth created through an increased membership you will obtain the material reward for which we all are striving.

Man proud of himself should not forget that he not long ago was the downtrodden under dog, the animal that hid and shivered and feared. Contrast the condition of affairs to-day with the condition existing in 1810, when, under what was known as the combination laws, the correspondents of the London Times were sentenced to two years imprisonment for daring to ask in union for increased wage.

Those laws were repealed through the earnest endeavor of men working shoulder-to-shoulder for the betterment of their race.

Step by step we have ascended the social ladder, and out of the tortuous darkness of past injustice we have reached the high plane where civil and religious liberty and equal rights prevail.

Had men at any one period of upliftment failed to realize fully the responsibility that rested upon them as individuals, nothing in the way of human progress could have been accomplished. We are to-day a free people, made free through the power of concerted endeavor—a power which at no single period in the upward struggle has been employed to wrest from others the things which in justice belong to them.

No greater franchise has ever been placed in the hands of man than the right to organize. The right to organize a great co-operative manufacturing and commercial institution is an especial privilege.

We want you to realize how great that privilege is.

This is an age when the entire industrial and commercial world is abandoning old principles for new and more approved methods. Competition was abolished in the workshop by the establishment of the union. TRADE UNIONISM IS A SUCCESS. Competition was banished from the commercial world by the trusts. TRUSTS ARE A SUCCESS.

You must acknowledge fully the truth of these two statements. You must further acknowledge as a truth that the age of a small dealer has gone, and that the working man can no longer stand alone. Each is a part of a great organization. NOW REALIZE ANOTHER TRUTH.

For good or for evil we have entered upon an era of BIG CAPITALS operating through GIGANTIC FACTORIES. These are huge equipped with perfect tools, manned by well drilled ARMIES OF MEN, all of which forms but a part of a PERFECT AND FAR REACHING ORGANIZATION.

This is a tendency which we cannot arrest, a tendency to which we must bow; but whether the big factory or the big store shall belong to a few men called capitalists, who exploit labor and employ it for the purpose of private gain, or whether they shall belong to the great body of people who labor therein and whose wants they supply, is a question with which we have nothing to do. But the United Coal, Iron and Lumber Corporation has decided in favor of the large unit. It has decided that this industry shall belong to the many, and not to the few; to the great body of the people whose thrift has created it and whose wants form the great foundation on which it rests. NOW TO THE POINT.

This is an age of big capitals in the commercial world. It is an age of co-operation also.

It is an age when every man should lay his hands to the rope and pull.

It is an age when, through co-operation, big factories and big stores may be operated for the benefit of many, instead of for the benefit of the few.

But how? WE WILL EXPLAIN.

If you possessed a fortune of five million dollars and a good business education, you would feel reasonably certain of success were you to embark in almost any commercial enterprise; but unfortunately you have not five million dollars, and since this is an age of big capital, wherein small enterprises have ceased to exist, you dare not go in business in a small way, but suppose 1,000 men with \$5,000 each, or 2,000 men with \$2,500 each, or 4,000 men with \$1,250 each, or 8,000 men with \$625 each, or 16,000 men with \$312.50 each, were to unite their capital, a fund of five million dollars would be created thereby.

Now, is there room for reasonable doubt that an enterprise capitalized at five million dollars, backed up by 16,000 earnest workers, sincerely striving to better their condition, would succeed, when you are willing to admit that, single handed and alone, it would be possible for you to achieve success with a good commercial education and the same amount of capital. DO YOU KNOW WHAT A CORPORATION IS?

Do you know what a corporation is?

It is an individual created by state. It is composed of from three to as many thousand men as its charter will permit. It enjoys all of the privileges enjoyed by an ordinary man; it can sue and be sued under the law.

The United Coal, Iron and Lumber Corporation is an individual created by state; it is a co-operative organization, and it proposes in time to have in its treasury many times five millions of dollars, but at present we ask you to consider yourself but a single, simple member of the United Coal, Iron and Lumber Corporation.

As such you have united your brawn and brain with the brawn and brain of other men and created a Giant Man. You have united your capital with the capital of others and produced the Giant Fund. The Giant Man and the Giant Fund unitedly will perform a giant's work, but each little man, each fibre must work if the giant work is to be accomplished. We want you to realize this. We are putting it up to you. WILL YOU DO YOUR PART?

In asking this, we are not asking much. We are asking you to be just to yourself. As a part of the Giant Man you are in business for yourself, and in working as we ask you to work you are working for yourself. If you and every other member of the corporation will labor in this spirit, there is no promise we can make that will be too rosy.

The United Coal, Iron and Lumber Corporation is a business organization first, last and always. There is nothing altruistic in its program. It will have nothing to do with the benevolence which does not know how to discriminate between charity and co-operation. It believes that all men should work, that no man is entitled to more than he honestly earns. As a co-operative body, it must apply to the conduct of its affairs every principle of modern business which resolves the muscle and mind of man into a mere working day machine, but in co-operation the machine is working for itself. Therefore we urge you to work as a part of the machine. If you will do this, the success of our enterprise is assured.

This is America, the land of big accomplishments. With our push and enterprise we have mastered the world of commerce. We have been the leaders in almost every field of human endeavor. Occasionally we have borrowed ideas from other nations, but whenever we have borrowed, we have borrowed only to improve.

CO-OPERATION is old in England. It is new to America. We have borrowed co-operation and we will improve it.

Do you know what the Co-operative Wholesale Society of England has accomplished during the past forty years?

The society was organized in 1864. Thirty weeks thereafter, with a membership of 18,337, it commenced business on a capital of \$12,275.

Now note its wondrous growth.

In 1905 it had a membership of 2,402,354. In 1905 its net profits were \$49,162,235.

In 1905 its total sales amounted to \$490,012,725. In 1905 its capital was \$288,633,575.

The above illustrates in a very limited degree what co-operation has accomplished in England. If England can accomplish so much, is it not possible that we can accomplish the same ends? You know we can.

Again we say: "It is up to you." It is up to you to absorb the principles of co-operation.

It is up to you to impart your enthusiasm to your neighbor. It is up to you to see that your neighbor imparts his enthusiasm to his neighbor.

If you will do your part, and your neighbor does his part, and every other member of the United Coal, Iron and Lumber Corporation performs his part in a praiseworthy manner, it will not be long before we will ask you to consider yourself not a part of a five million dollar man, but a part of a hundred million dollar man.

Very truly yours,

UNITED COAL, IRON AND LUMBER CORPORATION.

507 5th Avenue, New York.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN CO-OPERATION AND DESIRE TO BETTER YOUR CONDITION COMMERCIAL AND SOCIAL, GET OUT TODAY FOR YOUR BOOKLET.
"LOOKING BACKWARD AND LOOKING FORWARD."
WITH FULL PARTICULARS OF THE UNITED COAL, IRON AND LUMBER CORPORATION.