

WHAT THE CO-OPERATIVE COMMUNITY
MEANS TO A CO-OPERATIVE WORLD

The sharp contrast between today, June 1st, 1946, and the first day of June of last year, or the years preceding it, is so tremendous that each of us, I am sure, has a special and personal reason for celebrating the day. During those years many of us in this audience, and many of your sons and daughters, spent the month of June thousands of miles from home engaged in the serious business of war.

Today, however, most of us are back in the Yakima Valley living as good neighbors in our own communities. Zillah has made a practical demonstration of good neighborliness by holding this Community Day Celebration. Instead of declaring war on Sunnyside, or Toppenish, or Wapato, or Yakima, you have invited us to be your guests at a completely friendly and peaceful gathering. And I might add, there could be no more appropriate spot for such an occasion than in this beautiful park built by the co-operative effort of a friendly community.

Just what is a community? It consists not of land nor houses, but of the people of an area. But it takes more than a mere aggregation or association of people to make a progressive community. That requires a corporate state of mind--people thinking and acting together. It requires devotion to a common cause.

The strength and the weakness of a community lies in the voluntary loyalty of its people. No community can permanently succeed whose people associate in it merely for the advantages which they may gain.

There must be a genuine willingness to give as well as to receive, a real desire to do one's share for the common life. Human association cannot succeed on a basis of organized selfishness.

These fundamental principles of good living are more strongly recognized and adhered to today in the small towns of America. That is why we find big cities attempting to break down their population into small community centers so that each citizen will have a feeling of "belonging", of local spirit and local pride, and a keener realization of his responsibility toward his fellow-man.

In a progressive community, such as Zillah, through the co-operative efforts of individuals and clubs, the result is a wholesome and vigorous atmosphere in which business prospers. The friendly spirit and good-will of your merchants is certain to attract great numbers of farmers from the nearby Roza lands. Your prosperity will increase because Zillah is known as a friendly community.

Another type of co-operative action so characteristic of small towns is in providing suitable recreational and social facilities for children. This park and swimming pool clearly illustrate what I mean. 4-H Clubs, Boy Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, and other youth organizations, by filling up the lives of your children with useful and constructive activity, are preventing juvenile delinquency and building good citizenship. That, too, is a community problem, being solved by your co-operative effort.

Just as a community succeeds through the friendly co-operation of good citizens, so, too, does a state or nation. The citizens of the 48 states have been able to live peacefully as neighbors without civil war because of good patriotic national citizens who have been willing to contribute to, and sacrifice for, the national welfare.

Today, as we read the alarming news of industrial strife throughout America, growing in intensity and mounting in severity, we sometimes wonder if our peaceful tradition is about to end. I am

convinced, however, that before it is too late the leaders of labor and management will recall and be inspired by the old community spirit of co-operation. Stirred by the same hopes, the same fears, the same troubles, they will find themselves in agreement in the same manner that local communities have resolved their differences for generations.

If the community, state, or nation can solve its problems by the simple expedient of friendly co-operation, why then can't the entire world? After all, the world has become a community, too, and the question is no longer whether it is one, but whether it is going to be a good one or a bad one.

I believe that we can have a peaceful world if every nation would look to its own community life for the inspiration of unselfish co-operation surely to be found there. The willingness to do one's share, to give as well as to receive, and the friendly attitude of Zillah probably could be found in a Russian or British town, too. The application of these same qualities on a wider scale is all that it takes for international friendship. That nations can get along in peace is evident from the fact that the United States and Canada have lived for almost two centuries as peaceful neighbors while having the longest international boundary in the world and the only unfortified one. These two countries certainly have not lived in complete harmony. There have been many serious disputes; yet each international problem has been settled peaceably because of faith in our mutual good will.

The world as a whole certainly needs to profit from the home town example of co-operation. Probably all the people of the world are striving for the same objective. The harmony and perpetual peace, which is the objective of the U.N.O., can be achieved through

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co-operation--that type of co-operation for which the local
community is the chief exponent and the most convincing example.