

the Community's long life. The predominating spirit is still the spirit of the forefathers. Were it not so the Community could not be held together, for the Amana Society is after all simply a voluntary association depending for its perpetuity upon the general good will and good faith of its members.

TEMPORAL AND SPIRITUAL RULE

Extreme democracy in government and administration has never been the political ideal of the Inspirationists, but rather a strong central authority wisely administered and implicitly obeyed. The entire conduct of the affairs of the Amana Society rests with a Board of Trustees consisting of thirteen members who are elected annually by popular vote out of the whole number of Elders in the Community. Moreover, the members of the Board of Trustees are the spiritual as well as temporal leaders of the Community, and as such are known as the "Great Council of the Brethren". Thus there has been effected in the Community an harmonious blending of temporal rule and spiritual authority, which is regarded as the fulfillment of the will of the Lord as revealed through Inspiration.

The Trustees elect annually on the second Tuesday of the month of December out of their own number a President, a Vice President, and a Secretary. The incumbents are usually reëlected; for rotation in office has never been a part of the Amana theory of government.

There has always been a strong religious sentiment against allowing personal ambition to play much if any part in the government of the Community. To disregard any of the duties entrusted to a member is to "break the sacred covenant which the Brethren have made with the Lord and with one another." The officeholder is expected to accept office not for its honors or its perquisites, but as a sacred responsibility.

In the month of June in each year the Trustees exhibit to the voting members of the Society (who comprise, according to the by-laws, all male members who have signed the constitution, all widows, and such female members as are thirty years of age and are not represented through some male member) a full statement of "the real and personal estate of the Society". In matters of great importance special meetings of the whole Society may be called. But in general the Society has avoided the mistake (common enough in many contemporary communities) of too many mass meetings. It took five upheavals of the Icarian Community to teach the lesson of leaving routine administration to committees instead of discussing every detail in frequent meetings of the assembly.

The Amana Society aims to keep its members informed on the general condition of affairs; but there is a decided tendency to reduce unnecessary discussion to the minimum by "leaving such things to those that best understand them." The Board of

Trustees is the high court of appeal in cases of disagreements, dissension, and complaints within the Society. Owing to the nature of the Community there are no lawyers in Amana. However, in suits with outside parties the Society does not hesitate to employ counsel.

Each village is governed by a group of elders varying in number — not necessarily old men, but men who are deemed to be of deep piety and spirituality. At the same time the Community profoundly believes that “Days should speak and multitude of years should teach wisdom.” By that nice adjustment of functions that necessarily grows up in such a community, the highest authority in the village in matters spiritual is the Head Elder; in matters temporal, the resident Trustee. And although the Trustee is a member of the Great Council itself, which is the spiritual head of the Community, in the village church the Head Elder outranks the Trustee.

Each village keeps its own books and manages its own affairs in accordance with the resolutions of the Great Council; but all accounts are finally sent to the headquarters at Amana where they are inspected and the balance of profit or loss is discovered. It is presumed that the labor of each village produces a profit; but whether it does or not makes no difference in the supplies allotted to the village or to members thereof. The system of government is thus a sort of federation wherein each village

maintains a certain sphere of independence in local administration, but is under the general control and supervision of a governing central authority — the Board of Trustees or Great Council of the Brethren.

THE INSPIRATIONIST

Generations of right thinking and right living seem to have produced a distinct type in the Community of True Inspiration. The older men and women are plain and direct of speech, self-possessed and sedate. They have strong faces and honest eyes — faces refined by much thought upon spiritual things and purified by sacrifice and high aims. There is a gentleness in their demeanor that reminds one of the Quakers, and a firmness and a seriousness in their manner that bespeak their Pietist ancestry. They live quiet and peaceful lives and do not like to admit strangers to their privacy. They have a reputation for honesty and fair dealing among their neighbors and wherever their products are bought and sold. “If you have made a promise so keep it, and beware of untruthfulness and lies”, is one of the fundamental precepts in the training of the Inspirationist.

It is doubtful whether there are many places in the world outside of Amana where more tender care and respectful attention are given to the aged and infirm. Unproductive members of the Community enjoy all the privileges and comforts that the Community has to give. When the dissolution of the corporation was suggested in a recent lawsuit, it