

Model town is rising out of the forest at loco...

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Will be Home of the Employees at Imperial Oil Company's Refineries

If you wish to find a crowd of men, women and children, who are happy, delighted, excited, and overflowing with gladness, take a boat from Burrard Inlet to the new town which is arising out of the forest at loco, says G.M. Murray, in the *Vancouver Sun*. Talk about boom days, there is a boom on at loco — a home-making boom.

A week ago a gang of men started to cut-down trees, blow stumps and clear the land on the sunny slope which races upon the beach, and contracts are being let for the erection of cottages, bungalows, stores, a community hall, club houses and all the other features of a model city.

Employees Own Project

And though there is a boom on, it is a boom without real estate agents, and without speculation — a boom originated, projected and engineered by the employees of the *Imperial Oil Company* refineries. The new city is an employees' city. There are no walls about it and the only control over it is the usual municipal code governing in other British Columbia towns.

It is no company town. Its streets and parks and lanes are open to the public, and the only restrictions upon this new community will be the restrictions which good judgment will demand regarding the design and quality of the buildings.

William MacAdam, associated with the *Imperial Oil Company* in an advisory capacity, in conjunction with a committee of the employees, has been engaged for some time upon the work of finding a solution for the housing problem at the refineries. As a result of their efforts a new chapter is being written in the history of industrial welfare work on this continent. Workers themselves have laid-down the proposition, the working-out of which will provide them with housing facilities, equal to those afforded in the best residential sections of any city. They will own their own homes independent of any relationship that may exist between themselves and the company as its employees. They will secure their lots at the absolute cost of the land. Buildings are being purchased in quantity lots and will be assembled at cost, and in the construction of the buildings the employees will contribute labour, which will materially reduce the expense of building operations.

Ownership of the whole enterprise is vested in a co-operative organization known as the "Loco Townsite Company" with a capitalization of \$100,000. This society administers the town. The governing body is a "town council" of six men named by the employees. In the co-operative society, representatives of the *Imperial Oil Company* act along with the men. The *Imperial Oil Company* itself only appears in the transaction as guaranteeing the townsite against loss — in plain language, as an endorser of its employees' note.

May Have Free Lot

The worker who wishes to build his own house without assistance from the Townsite Company is at liberty to do so, and his industry will be rewarded to the extent that the Townsite Company will give him free of any cost a city lot upon which to build. Of course, he will not be allowed to build a ramshackle building or shack, but will be held down to a cottage or bungalow in keeping with the rest of the surroundings.

Employees who are not prepared to build their own homes are financed by the Townsite Company on a twenty-year plan whereby payments will be less than usual monthly rentals.

An absolutely new feature is that of a group insurance policy under which the heirs of home-builders are protected in case of death. Under this arrangement the home owner may insure himself for the entire cost of his home. In case of death, the widow is handed a clear title (fully paid-up) of the home together with the total amount paid-in to-date of capital account. In a case where the home-builder meets death within the first year, his widow gets the deed and the amount of money already paid in — in short, this insurance provision makes the employees clearly independent of the company. Other provisions are worked-out

which give the employee fullest liberty and cuts out all paternalism. In short, a basis is reached where employees may have excellent home surroundings at a low cost. The *Imperial Oil Company's* only reward is that they have the advantage of the cooperation of a contented and harmonious community of workers. The employee is ensured against any loss whatsoever, and in the event of any misfortune overcoming him, does not leave his widow to struggle over a mortgage, but rather provides for her and the family a comfortable modern home in a model community in one of the most beautiful valleys in British Columbia.

Save Time and Money

With the house shortage in the *City of Vancouver*, and with rents constantly mounting, the new plan has, of course, been welcomed by the several hundred members of the company's staff.

loco is some ten miles from the city, and since the opening of the plant some years ago the majority of the workers were forced to travel back and forth, morning and night, from the city at much expense and at a great waste of time. Travelling to and from work adds to their hours of labour more than 40 per cent, it is estimated — time which is lost — hours which may now go to recreation or profitable work.

The property which the Townsite Company has secured is a short distance from the plant with a splendid view of the inlet. There the residents will have the full benefit of country life with all the conveniences of the modern city. Modern sewerage facilities are being installed — water mains which pipe water from pure mountain streams down to the town are being laid. The *Western Canada Power* company is installing the electrical lines which will serve for power and light.

Central Heating Plan

Plans are being made to install a central heating plant whereby all the homes may be heated cooperatively, the fuel to be used being crude oil which can be bought at cost from the nearby refineries.

Electrical stoves will be installed in the homes in which current for cooking and lighting will be furnished at an extremely low rate per kilowatt as compared with the rates in the larger cities.

Co-operative Buying

Some of the features of the new community include a club house, where dances and entertainments may be held; a boathouse on the waterfront; a community hall, where public meetings may be held; a community garage and a cooperative store. Private business houses and garages may be opened in the town. There will be no limiting of business establishments, but the employees feel that through a community store they may have the benefits of collective buying which will be a saving for all concerned.