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AIMS AND VALUES OF THE CIVILIAN CONSERVA- TION CORPS

I. OBJECTIVES

IT is common knowledge that the Civilian Conservation Corps became a reality because of an economic disturbance of sufficient violence to produce a social crisis. Among the various phenomena of the period were thousands of young men, unmarried and unemployed, wandering about the country or congregating in the cities. They were at once an economic and a social liability.

The New Deal, keenly aware of the challenging problem presented by these young men, proposed to convert them from a liability to economic and social assets. The Civilian Conservation Corps, conveniently abbreviated to CCC, defines the plan of conversion.

The first objective was Relief. The men needed work, shelter, food, and clothing. The objective has been realized by building camps in forest areas where the men are provided abundantly with the necessities of life.

By reaching this first objective the social danger involved in the idleness of thousands was reduced to a minimum by segregating the men from the general social body and making a contented life in the camps possible.

We must realize, too, that CCC relief is more far-reaching than the simple care of the men directly involved. The bulk of the men in the CCC are required to be between the ages of 18 and 25, unmarried, but from

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a family needing help. That is, the CCC enrollee must be one whose family is listed on the relief rolls of his local community. This spreads the relief administered through the CCC because each man is paid for the work done while in camp at the base rate of \$30 per month, \$25 of which is sent directly to his family. In Virginia the money so released amounted to \$2,493,782 up to July 1, 1934.

The period of enrolment in the CCC is 6 months, with the privilege of re-enrolling for another 6-month period at the expiration of the first enrolment. Thus the relief offered is spread to cover one year.

It is true that not all men are able to secure profitable employment when the year is finished and there is, therefore, some criticism of the policy of compulsory discharge at the completion of one year of service. The answer to the criticism is in the policy of relief "spread." The CCC camps are capable of a maximum occupation of 360,000 men. This number is approximately one-ninth of the men eligible and desiring enrolment. It is certainly sound policy to make any type of relief with public funds available to all who are eligible.

Next to relief, the other great objective of the CCC was the conservation of our forest resources.

On the whole, Americans have not been "forest conscious," except for the few who have seen and taken great personal fortunes by ruthlessly cutting our trees for immediate gain, giving no thought to the future.

However, there have been those in the Federal government who have seen the worth and necessity of forest conservation. The National Forests under the Department of Agriculture, the National Parks

under the Department of the Interior, and nearly all State Forests and Parks, have been surveyed; and plans have been developed for conservation. These plans anticipated years of labor and the outlay of millions of dollars. But public support never was adequate for the full operation of the plans.

Then came the present crisis, and a great opportunity. Federal and State forests were in great need of large numbers of men to work in them, and Federal and State governments were faced with a huge surplus of healthy young workers who had to be fed. The CCC camps are the obvious result. It would seem that only total stupidity could have prevented the present program. Future Americans may yet bless the poverty of today for tomorrow's rich forests.

II. THE COST

Every thinking American is interested in the cost of such a program. The magazine, *Fortune*, in a recent issue, placed the cost as between \$900 and \$1000 a year per enrollee, which, although not an official figure, appears to be a fairly accurate calculation. Last June (1934) the cost to that date was stated as \$235,000,000, with the further estimate that the current year (to June 30, 1935) would cost \$185,000,000. These figures total \$420,000,000. Recent press dispatches from Washington gave the cost to date as \$440,000,000. For my purposes this outside figure may be used as a guide.

III. IS IT WORTH IT?

The idea that money spent by the Federal Government will ever be returned to the hard-pressed taxpayer in cash or in any form of dividend seems to be foreign to American thought. Such is the case, however, with the cost of the CCC.

The first returns should be thought of in terms of dollars.

Consider—If the men in the CCC had not been so employed, local charities would

have been to some expense. Whatever that expense would have been, estimated at at least one-fifth of the CCC cost, should be subtracted from the \$440,000,000 cost of the CCC.

Consider—On the basis of recorded losses from forest fires in previous years, an expectancy for a present year may be computed. During the first year of the CCC the expected loss from forest fires was cut 70 per cent. I do not know what that amounts to in dollars, but some one has said that the savings from forest fires alone would pay the bill for the CCC. At any rate the forest fire saving is a considerable sum and should be subtracted from the \$440,000,000 cost.

Consider—The value, at present cost figures, of the roads and trails built, bridges constructed, and telephone lines erected. The value of these things alone has been conservatively placed at \$265,000,000. Subtract that figure from what is left of the \$440,000,000 cost, and the CCC becomes an economic asset to the nation, rather than a liability.

In Virginia alone, up to July 1, 1934, 2,244 miles of road and trail have been built and 314 miles of telephone line erected.

Consider—The future saving in fire losses by reason of quick notification of the location of a fire by telephone, and the quick arrival at the scene of fire-fighting crews by means of the new roads.

Consider—The increased future dividends payable to the American people through larger timber crops, made possible by CCC Timber Stands Improvement work. In Virginia 60,799 acres of forest have been subject to such improvement.

Consider—The enlarged future timber crop through re-forestation, making present barren land profitable.

Consider—But there is not time to dwell upon the value of improved water sheds, or soil erosion prevention, of the control

of tree diseases.

From the economic viewpoint the CCC is worth more than it costs. It will pay handsome dividends to the American people in national wealth.

There are other values in the CCC not definable in terms of money. They are the human values. However important it is to conserve a tree, it is immensely more important to conserve a boy.

His physical body must be conserved. There is a vital relationship between one's social outlook—one's spiritual welfare—and beefsteak. The first step in saving a citizen, or saving a soul, is preserving a healthy body. Large numbers of the CCC men come to the camps underfed and underweight. Once in camp, they are fed abundantly of wholesome food, prepared in palatable fashion, by expert cooks. The average gain in weight for the first year of the CCC was 8 pounds per man.

In addition to food, work and play are necessary to the sound body. All CCC men work 6 hours a day, 5 days a week, in the open air. Weight is thereby transformed to hardened muscles and abounding energy.

And the men play. Each camp sends teams in baseball, football, basketball, and boxing to intercamp contests. Each camp sponsors inter-barrack athletic contests. In Virginia each camp has a program of mass games. Thus weight, muscle, and energy become transformed into the joy of physical living.

To conserve a boy, his morale must be high. So many of these CCC men come to the camps defeated, dispirited, and embittered, that an observer feels he is witnessing the tragedy of the ages. But when these same men leave, it is a different story. Restored physical strength, with the consciousness that they have earned their way the last 12 months, sends them out ready to battle for economic independence. The CCC is not a "glorified dole". These men

work, they earn, they are paid, they are worth all they receive, and they know it—are proud of it. The CCC has given them an opportunity to win back self-confidence and self-respect. That alone is worth more to America than all the dollars involved.

Education and intelligence also shape the whole man. In the Third Corps Area, comprising Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, we are determined that every CCC enrollee, during the period of one year, shall be raised in intellectual level the equivalent of at least one school grade. To this end every man is offered classes of instruction in reading, writing, English, and arithmetic. In addition each man is required to attend a weekly health lecture and to take the American Red Cross 15-hour Life Saving course, to attend a weekly lecture on some subject of general informational value, and a monthly inspirational talk. Further, instruction is offered in many vocations, and each camp is required to maintain schools in cooking, carpentry, and truck care and driving. A graph of the educational status of the camps would reach its peak at grade 7, the average educational experience being about grade 6. To raise the level of this mass of men intellectually is a major contribution to the life of America.

The complete man is moral and religious. The things that are right or wrong, socially and individually, are clearly taught in the CCC camps. Every 8 or 10 camps have the personal and supervisory services of a Chaplain. Under his leadership religious life is fostered. It is true that roughly one-half of the men are not affiliated with any organized religious group, and they do not bear the outward signs of religious men. But at heart they are religious. The CCC enrollee is building a House of Character in which he shall forever dwell. Such a house cannot be built to withstand the storms of life except on the foundation of

a right attitude toward God. We believe that because of the CCC many men will return to normal life with a better attitude toward God and men. That is religion. Will you put a value on that?

So the CCC aims to relieve distress, to conserve and increase national wealth, to build men. To a remarkable degree it is realizing its aims: 750,000 men have already been in the camps. Another 350,000 are in them now. Welfare agencies indicate another 2,000,000 are eligible and ready for their turn. If the CCC continues, these figures mean a minimum of 3,000,000 men grateful for the chance to work, to grow, to live—3,000,000 men of whom America may well be proud.

CHARLES W. CAULKINS

THE CRISIS IN AMERICAN LIFE; ITS EDUCATIONAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

MAY I bring you the greetings and best wishes of the National Education Association? Between it and your great International Council there is much in common. Your general secretary, Dr. Hugh S. Magill, is a product of the public schools and a former school superintendent. He helped in the reorganization of the National Education Association during the war years and was its field secretary during its period of most rapid growth. He is typical of thousands of school men and women whose interest in religious education is as deep and abiding as their interest in general education. His coming to you is an example of that professional cross fertilization which frequently has helped to enrich our American life and to unify our people. The school and the church have a common faith in the improvability of man and a common purpose

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to lift humanity to a higher and a finer life. It is one of the encouraging signs that people working in church and school are finding ways of making their organizations more effective. Within two decades the active membership of the National Education Association has multiplied itself twenty-fold until it now includes nearly 200,000 of the best teachers of the nation, representing every branch of the profession, and every section of the country. There has been more improvement in the quality of the teaching staff in the public schools of America during the past ten years than in the entire history of the schools up to that time.

The American public school from kindergarten through college and university is the most stupendous application of the Christian doctrine of equality of opportunity that has been made in this or any other age. It is our best example of high social purpose and of efficient and far-sighted administration. Visualize in round numbers a mighty army of thirty million young people working together day after day with their gifted teachers in a common effort to improve their lives—24,000,000 in elementary schools, 5,000,000 in high schools, and a million in colleges. Thirty million youth learning to be punctual and regular, learning to work together and to play together, learning how to discipline their minds and spirits, learning how to dream, to do, and to be.

May I quote from the *Foreword* of the Tenth Yearbook of the Department of Superintendence of the National Education Association:

The great fundamental principles of religious living are in the very life of our public schools. In fact, it may be argued that our public schools constitute the most gigantic, organized application of these principles the world has ever known. . . . The program of public education . . . is addressed to the spiritual enrichment of the multitude, of the meek and lowly, as well as the exalted and the mighty. . . . "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven" reveals an attitude toward child life