

FIRST YEAR'S  
RESULTS IMPRESSIVE

At the end of the first year, April 5, 1933 to March 31, 1934, Director Fechner submitted a report of accomplishment whose figures were astounding to both layman and professional conservationist. Considering the difficulties attendant upon establishing the Corps, and the crude human material that comprised its enrollment, Mr. Fechner's was truly a remarkable document. Here are some of the highlights:

15,241 miles of new telephone lines strung  
18,531 miles of fire-breaks cleared  
686,709 man-days spent fighting forest fires  
15,617 miles of roadside and trailside cleared  
as "barren" fire areas

620 lookout houses and fire towers built  
953,318 acres of forest stand improved by thinning  
and replanting  
25,413 miles of new truck trails constructed  
1,860,116 acres treated for eradication of insect pests  
2,757,419 acres for control of tree and plant diseases  
420,633 erosion (soil saving) check-dams built  
98,592 acres of trees planted, 1,000 to the acre  
3,747 miles of fence erected  
618,757 feet of pipe lines laid

Of the more than one hundred varieties of work project partly represented by the above list, let us single out one, the Winooski River Valley Project in Vermont.

After the disastrous flood of November, 1927, in this Vermont Valley (55 lives lost, property damage \$13,500,000), the War Department was called upon to submit a plan for flood control in the Winooski. This plan, after exhaustive surveys, was presented to Congress in February, 1931, and its existence when the Corps came into being in 1933, was credited by the War Department with having speeded up construction by at least six months, possibly a year.

In July of 1933, the CCC was at work in the Winooski constructing dams and reservoirs, clearing obstructions and doing other engineering work. In March, 1936, another flood, comparable in volume to that of 1927, struck this region. The Winooski flood control project was slightly more than two-thirds completed, but it was enough. There was no wide-spread damage in the Valley; the dams held back the battering waters. The

cities of Barre and Montpelier, badly damaged in 1927, escaped practically unscathed. An early CCC historian wrote that, "The people of Vermont acknowledge their debt to the work of the CCC in preserving their lives and property." The War Department, whose engineers directed this vast undertaking, added their praise, to this effect: "The security thus afforded the inhabitants of the Winooski Valley against loss of lives and property will serve for many years to come as a most fitting monument to the services rendered by the Civilian Conservation Corps to the people of Vermont." Save for a smattering of junior enrollees who were assigned to help out toward the finish of the project, the work was done by war veteran enrollees under direction of Army engineers.

Again, more than half a million man-days devoted to fighting forest fires in that first year! If ever a peace-time outfit proved itself a soldier to the core, the CCC did in its prodigious battles against unharnessed elements of nature. Not only was the CCC to function in the orderly and planned work of conservation, but through the years it was to become the first line of defense in national and local catastrophes--Potomac, Ohio, Mississippi river floods, a Florida hurricane; an Alabama tornado; Oregon and Idaho et al forest fire; blizzards in Nevada, Utah, Wyoming; the Middle West drought of 1934; the suffocating plagues of grasshopper and Mormon cricket hordes; the New England fire and hurricane clean-up--always the CCC boys were called upon to rescue lives and property and there were hundreds of instances where individual youngsters performed acts of heroism that were far and beyond the conscientious call of duty. It was inevitable that some form of recognition for such acts would evolve. It did, in the shape of Certificates for Valor. So avidly did the Director's office guard the integrity of these certificates that though a multitude out of the 3,000,000 overall enrollees were recommended for them, only 41 were issued.

#### SAFETY PROGRAM IMPORTANT

Among the highlights of 1934 was institution of a Safety Program directed by a safety engineer attached to the Director's office. Besides formulating, publishing and executing rules, regulations, codes, specifications, etc., on safety by the Safety Division, the program included: The furnishing of safety equipment; development of safety devices; thorough inspection of buildings, vehicles, tools, other equipment; good housekeeping; adequate fire protection; safety orientation schools for enrollees; teaching first aid and life saving, monthly safety meetings of all camp personnel; awards for best safety records.

Approximately 50 percent of all fatal accidents through the life

of the Corps was caused by vehicles. Frequency of other fatal accidents was in the following order: drowning, falling objects, railroad, falls of persons, fire electricity, suicide.

In the eight-year existence of the Safety Division, fatal accidents were cut from a rate of 1.14 per thousand enrollees to .90; non-fatal accidents were cut from 16.81 per thousand to 4.34.

Also, in 1934, occurred the devastating drought that afflicted 21 states. Out of his half-billion-dollar emergency appropriation for drought relief, the President allotted \$50,000,000 to the CCC for enrollment of 50,000 young men and veterans in the stricken areas to devote their labors exclusively to drought relief projects. These were enrollees like any other and the CCC pattern of spreading its benefactions to the greatest number of individuals was adhered to in the compulsion for junior enrollees (43,000) to make substantial allotments monthly to their families -- families not yet recovered from cash and crop failures before this new blight jerked them back to the wallows of poverty and despair.

The second year saw the accomplishments of the first year more than doubled: 2,000,000 man-days fighting forest fires as against 686,000 the first year; double the mileage of telephone lines strung, and so on, down the whole line of projects. The motley-clad striplings of that first enrollment, bunched in drafty tents, and clumsily ignorant of how to handle a tool, through the months had burgeoned into a self-reliant Army in overalls, sturdy-legged and competent.

The Department of Agriculture reported that in those first two years the CCC "has pushed forward conservation progress from 10 to 20 years." Department of the Interior said, "Through Emergency Conservation Work, the development of the Nation's recreational areas has been advanced further than would have been possible in 10 to 20 years under the old order that prevailed prior to initiation of the Civilian Conservation Corps."

CCC EXPANDS TO  
520,000

The life of the Corps originally was fixed at two years by the Act of Congress, approved March 31, 1933. Now, along in October, 1934, the Advisory Council, had its jubilation over the splendid work-and-relief record tempered by misgivings as to whether Congress would extend the life of the Corps. However, the horizon

brightened in January when the President talked of increasing the Corps, to one million men, and a plan was outlined for increasing the enrollment to 600,000. The President approved the Army limit of 600,000 in April 1933. Passage of Public Resolution No. 11 (74th Congress) removed all doubts; life of the Corps was extended two years. On April 23, instructions went to all Corps Areas, signed by Director Fechner, outlining procedures required to raise the Corps to 600,000 men and 2,652 camps. Age limits were raised to twenty-eight for juniors. The eligibility regulations required that all men come from relief rolls.

During the next few months Corps strength expanded rapidly to 500,000. By Presidential decision the strength of the junior and War Department contingent was limited to 500,000. In August of 1935 the Corps reached an all-time high of 520,000 including Indians and territorials. The number of camps jumped to 2,514.

#### MOVE TO MAKE CORPS PERMANENT-FAILS

From that date the strength of the Corps gradually was reduced until it was below 400,000 in early 1937. Then came the initial move to make the Civilian Conservation Corps permanent. On April 5, 1937 the President sent a special message to Congress recommending Corps permanency. A bill establishing a permanent CCC was introduced in Congress on April 23, and reported favorably two days later. The House amended the bill to continue the Corps for three years. The Senate voted for a permanent CCC. The House bill won out, was enacted into law on June 28, 1937.

The 1937 Act greatly increased the authority of the Director, made education and training an important CCC objective, eliminated the relief roll provision stipulating only that enrollees must be unemployed and in need of employment, changed the age limitations for juniors to 17 to 23, and set 300,000 as the maximum strength of the junior and war veterans quota. It provided for 15,000 Indians and territorials.

#### AFTER FIVE YEARS

Gradually the Corps settled back to a smooth working organization with a maximum enrollment of 300,000 juniors and war veterans and 1,500 camps. By this time the Corps had a real educational program. It was housed for the most part in portable buildings of its own design. It had physical rehabilitation, including daily calisthenics. It had a fixed daily schedule and all enrollees worked forty hours per week. Enrollees shared importantly in camp administration, each man having equal opportunity to rise from the ranks to assistant leader or leader,

