

The Civilian Conservation Corps was born of a peace-time emergency. A war ended it.

The CCC was this country's answer to the challenging question of whether Democracy could and would deal effectively and boldly with the most potentially disastrous unemployment crisis for youth in the Nation's history.

The CCC was official recognition of the perilous state of the Nation's natural resources. It marked the first time in this country's history that man power and funds were provided in quantities sufficient to initiate and advance a practical, broad-scale program to conserve, develop and expand its basic, essential resources of forests, top-soil and water.

The Civilian Conservation Corps grew up in an age of such chemical miracles as synthetic rubber, plastics and nylon. In a very practical sense it was a chemical miracle too. It was a fusion of two great needs -- a need for jobs for unemployed, under-privileged youth and a need for a dynamic program to conserve, rebuild, protect and develop forests, agricultural and grazing lands and water resources. It was fusion of two great needs energized and activated by adequate appropriations.

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT
A MAJOR PROBLEM IN 1933

In 1933, welfare authorities declared, and backed their statements with proof, that the annual waste of human energy through unemployment among youth staggered the imagination. It was asserted that a real danger existed that millions of idle youngsters would become permanently unemployable if forced to loaf during the formative years when they should be getting a start in life. The Nation faced a situation where millions of young men were placed in disgracefully unfair competition with other youths lucky enough to have jobs. While more fortunate young men were developing sound work habits and attitudes and gaining work experience necessary to their getting ahead in the world, the unemployed youngster stood idle -- marking time.

The Civilian Conservation Corps put three million men to work. While this organization operated, a constant stream of raw, idle youngsters moved each quarter in the wholesome outdoor atmosphere of the

camp and a steady stream of self-confident, work toughened, disciplined men moved back into society.

CONDITION OF NATURAL RESOURCES
CAUSES DEEP CONCERN

In 1933 the Nation's natural resources ledger was drenched in red ink. A national conservation program to replant wastelands and stop erosion on lands was long overdue. But the conservation program, so ably advanced by the Corps, was not initiated solely because it was vitally necessary to the national welfare. It was started primarily because it offered useful, practical and essential work for needy and often desperate young men who could find no employment. It owed its inception to the circumstance that the President had long been concerned over the Nation's natural resources. The unemployment situation represented his first chance to do something important about it.

Often a surgeon does not know the full seriousness of a patient's condition until the scalpel has done its work. The same situation held true in the case of our natural resources. It was not until the young men and war veterans of the CCC had been hewing, digging, planting, plowing and otherwise rebuilding our forests and top-soil for several years that the Nation awakened to the fact that there was a bottom to the natural resources' barrel and that our remaining resources were dwindling at a dangerous rate. It took an international economical crisis big enough to shake the entire world to give the United States a real conservation program and to start it on the road toward a balanced natural resources budget.

TWIN PROBLEMS OF UNEMPLOYMENT AND
CONSERVATION ATTACKED BY CCC

The Corps operated as an agency for aiding youth and advancing conservation for nine years and three months. Then the War and its demands for man power on the front line and workers on the war production front dried up the reservoir of unemployed youth. The need for a Corps to furnish jobs for young men was ended. The need for a Corps to push forward conservation was as great as ever, probably greater as the result of war inroads on top-soil and lumber, but war needs had first priority and Corps operations were halted.

The Corps did a good job. It was universally popular. There

were some criticisms as to costs but no disagreements on the soundness and usefulness of its employment, training and conservation activities. Should it be reestablished after the War in its pre-war habiliments or in some modified form. There is only one sound answer to this question. That answer is a firm affirmative if the need exists after the war for a Federal organization to provide useful employment to idle young men who have never been previously employed and returning soldiers and discharged war production workers who need jobs and training to fit them for peace employment.

If there is no unemployment problem after the war then revival of the CCC would rest exclusively upon its value as a work corps for protecting and conserving natural resources and for national preparedness. A conservation program is vital to the country's future and must be advanced by some agency. If youth unemployment exists the Corps represents the most economical, the soundest and the surest way to get the conservation job done.

CORPS RECORD SOUND BASIS FOR ITS REVIVAL AFTER WAR

A brief glance at the Corps' record, told in more detail in other sections of this report, offers sound support for revival of the Corps if unemployment is a post-war problem.

In its broadest sense, the CCC was three million men attacking a Nationwide conservation task of Herculean proportions. It was a training school of practical experience, an outdoors school whose camps and laboratories were the Nation's huge expanse of forests, parks, public lands, rivers and farm communities. It was three million men building muscle, increasing weight and height, getting physically tough and competent while they labored at useful tasks. It was 3,000,000 men taking calisthenics and marching drills, developing sound work habits, developing skills becoming accustomed to discipline and barracks life and learning how to take care of themselves. It was unemployed youth pulling itself up by its bootstraps.

The Civilian Conservation Corps was a great chain of outdoor work camps, the largest single peace-time housekeeping, training and work organization ever operated in this or any other country. At its peak the Corps operated a maximum of 2,652 camps. Over the years the average number of camps in operation was just below 1,6000. From June 30, 1937, the maximum number in operation at any time was 1,5000. The average

number of men enrolled in camp during the time the Corps operated was just above 300,000. This meant that the CCC was a housekeeping organization which served about a million meals a day and consumed more than 275,000 tons of food each year. As a training school it maintained 1500 school houses and 25,000 instructors who doubled as teachers and camp officers and foremen.

The CCC was a highly mobile, splendidly equipped, well staffed work organization capable of constructing anything from a road like the Alaska Highway to the Winooski, Vermont flood control dams. At its average strength the CCC utilized 40,000 trucks, tractors, graders bulldozers and other items of automotive or heavy equipment as well as tens of thousands of axes, peavies, jack-hammers, crowbars, transits and other tools and equipment. As the CCC camps from 1937 on were of portable construction they could be moved quickly and economically.

Over a period of nine years and three months the Civilian Conservation Corps had an enrollment of 3,300,000 and gave jobs to about 3,000,000 separate individuals. Corps expenditures were \$2,969,000,000. With this money the Corps aided directly about 15,000,000 persons including enrollees and their families and non-enrolled personnel such as camp commanders, project superintendents and foremen and educational advisers. Enrollees allocated to their homes, out of their earnings, about \$700,000,000. Foodstuffs, equipment, building materials and other items purchased by the Corps in depression years indirectly aided hundreds of thousands of industrial and agricultural employees.

CCC PAID BIG DIVIDENDS IN TRAINED MAN POWER-CONSERVATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS

For its investment in the CCC the United States on June 30, 1942, had this to show:

A reservoir of CCC trained and physically conditioned man power which was far better equipped for service in the Armed Forces or on the war production assembly line than it would have been had it not been for the CCC program.

A vastly improved natural resources balance sheet which carried such items on the asset side as three billion trees planted, 125,000 miles of truck trails built, 89,000 miles of telephone lines laid, 800 new state parks developed, 40,000,000 acres of farm lands benefited through erosion control measures and the rehabilitation of drainage ditches, better grazing conditions on the national domain and in increasing wildlife population. The present and future value of the work completed was estimated as having a present and future value of more than \$2,000,000,000.

At least 1,000,000 specialists trained in CCC camps on work projects. These included more than 100,000 men taught to cook and bake, 100,000 practical mechanics and repair men, 200,000 road and bridge construction workers, 100,000 radio operators, 50,000 telephone linemen, 100,000 construction workers, 100,000 as surveyors and surveyor helpers, 100,000 loggers, 250,000 truck and tractor operators, and hundreds of thousands of trained workmen.

A sound practicable formula for handling youth unemployment and conservation problems.

A home front strengthened by employment which kept families intact through depression days.

In assessing the value of the Corps and its potential usefulness in the solution of post-war problems, it should be borne in mind that the CCC action, was more than simply a organization which provided jobs for young men and conducted conservation work programs. The record shows that the Corps did outstanding work in the training of young men both for civilian pursuits and for service in the Armed Forces. The Corps proved its worth also as an agency for spurring business recovery, for alleviating distress caused by unemployment and for national preparedness.

Although the CCC was a peace-time organization, perhaps its greatest contribution to the national welfare in the light of international conditions today was of a military character. The work, practical training, discipline and outdoor life of the CCC camps helped more than 2,000,000 young men preprre themselves for war service. Although the Corps did not provide training with guns, it did give the young men the physical toughening and most of the fundamentals in the school of the soldier. Over this same period it afforded the War Department opportunity to develop and train 60,000 reserve officers and to try out an unprecedented peace-time scale its army mobilization, supply and transportation plans.

Any fair analysis of the results achieved through the Civilian Conservation Corps program will show that the United States was and is being richly repaid for every cent expended on the CCC. Hundreds of thousands of young men who were toughened physically and who learned hos to work and who developed special skills in the Corps are paying for the CCC through their activities in the Armed Forces, in war plant industries

and on farms. Two and a half million acres of young trees planted by enrollees are growing into lumber needed to replace war production losses. A vastly improved forest protected system constructed by the Corps is helping to guard one of our most vital war resources. Millions of acres of farm lands protected from erosion by the Corps or benefited through the rehabilitation of clogged drainage ditches make it possible for the Nation to grow more food than would be the case if the CCC had not been launched. The Nation's natural resource balance sheet shows more black ink than it did ten years ago.

The good which the Civilian Conservation Corps did in building up the health and morale of more than two million youngsters was of immeasurable value to the national welfare, yet its worth cannot be computed in dollars and cents. The CCC saved millions of acres of timberland from being burned over. It brought grass and water back to thousands of acres of lands now growing beef for war. It increased the wildlife population. It enormously increased forest and park recreation facilities. It restored barren and badly eroded lands to production. The value of all conservation work done, in terms of humanity, war uses and the future, is tremendous yet only a relatively small part of the conservation results can be reduced to a dollars and cents value.

There is much to be said in favor of reviving the CCC program when peace comes. There are arguments that may be used against its reopening. The best arguments for reopening the Corps, if need for such an organization exists, are to be found in the living record which the Corps left behind it. The arguments that probably will be used against reestablishment of the CCC will be taken from the Corps' cost sheets. It cost about \$1,000 to maintain a man in the Corps for one year. With this \$1,000 the Corps fed, clothed, paid and trained the young man, aided him to help out in the support of dependents and financed the conduct of the conservation program. All charges were assessed against the youth. It may be argued that \$1,000 is too much for the Federal Government to invest in any one young man's future or in natural resources for a generation to come. Any fair audit will show that the country more than got its money's worth. But if it is thought that CCC costs should be reduced, this can be done through certain administrative changes.

PLANNING FOR A POST-WAR CCC SHOULD BEGIN NOW

The final decision as to whether the Corps is to be reopened probably should await the war's end. But this does not mean that

post-war CCC planning should be delayed until peace comes. The Nation's major aim today is winning the war. But in exerting every possible effort to defeat the Axis as promptly as possible, this country's leaders should not neglect to plan for peace. Past experience indicates that while the war is being fought, plans should be made not only for winning the peace but for softening the terrific economic shocks which will surely follow the war. In the opinion of the Director, these post-war plans should include the time tested Civilian Conservation Corps formula.

Inclusion of the CCC in post-war planning is recommended because of the belief that both the major problems--youth unemployment and conservation--which prompted the initiation of the CCC in 1933, will be present when peace comes. Probably these problems will exist in even more aggravated form than in 1933. In addition the United States will have a big training problem. Millions of men will be changing jobs. Many of the new jobs will require some training. The pre-war CCC was successful in solving unemployment, conservation and training programs.

Let us look at the post-war prospects and needs from the practical standpoint of what a post-war CCC could offer toward their solution. In the first place there is every indication that serious unemployment will follow in the wake of the War unless wise planning and bold execution by industry and government avert it. How critical the unemployment problem will become will depend, probably, upon the efficacy of the war-time planning for peace that is taking place now. There are many factors which will contribute to a potentially dangerous unemployment crisis. There are millions of soldiers to be discharged and placed in private jobs. There are millions of war production workers who face lay-offs while industry adjusts war industry to a peace-time basis, unless careful plans are made to furnish them jobs. And in addition there will be the hundreds of thousands of young men just reaching working age who will surge forward into the labor market during the months and years immediately following the War. What about the returning soldiers. What about the discharged war workers. What of these youngsters seeking their first job. Can jobs in industry be found for them all.

There can be no doubt as to the need for a post-war Corps to do conservation work. America's natural resources, especially timber and top-soil had reached a new low at the time the Corps was initiated. Today they are being depleted at a rate which is causing great concern

on the part of the Department of Agriculture and conservationists generally. The CCC did a splendid job of planting trees, improving forest stands and building forest protection improvements but the toll of war probably will more than off-set the pre-war CCC reforestation gains. The War is consuming millions of board feet of lumber and huge quantities of lumber products. It is demanding all the food farmers can grow. More food means greater use of the soil. Greater use of the soil may and almost certainly will mean soil depletion. Increased land use during the First World War caused a tremendous soil erosion problem.

During the War the forces building up and protecting natural resources wealth have been enormously slowed down. The white pine blister rust, fought successfully by the CCC over millions of acres of white pine forest stands, is making new and greater head-way. It represents a menace to the entire white pine industry. Expansion of the national effort to combat the blister rust menace cannot begin too soon.

A CHALLENGING CONSERVATION PROBLEM WILL FACE NATION WHEN WAR ENDS

When the War ends, the Nation will face a challenging conservation task. A rough idea of what this Nation is up against, is found in records forwarded to this office by the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture in March 1942. These disclosed that it would take 1,000,000 men twenty-four years to complete the backlog of essential conservation work which had accumulated as of that date. This backlog did not represent made work--it represented work vital to the national interest. It represented work on which this country must make a beginning and carry forward continuously for many years to come if a future timber and top-soil famine is to be averted.

Something like 100 million acres of devastated, cut-over, burned-over and barren lands require replanting to become productive. One hundred billion seedlings will be needed to do this job. The Department of Agriculture stated that 1,000 camps with a combined enrollment of 200,000 men could be used to advantage for twenty-four years on tree planting and other reforestation projects of vital importance to our future national security. It stated that the Soil Conservation Service estimated that it would take 3,000 camps of 600,00 men, working twenty-four years to complete the erosion control work which needed to be done. The Department of Agriculture did not recommend the establishment of 4,000 camps. Its report simply outlined conservation work which should be done if this country is to husband its natural

resources in a manner which will assure generations still to come a share of America's natural resources wealth.

The Department of the Interior states that the National Park Service, the Reclamation Bureau, the Grazing Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service and the General Land Office could use profitably the services of 1,000 camps of 200,000 men for twenty-one years. These camps would build needed recreational facilities adjacent to great population centers, rehabilitate and reclaim millions of acres of western lands which are at present valueless or nearly so, for livestock grazing, conserve water on millions of acres of arid and semi-arid western lands and increase and preserve desirable species of wildlife.

Will a CCC be needed for training. It is certain that subsequent to the present War, the United States will face a big training job. Men converting from war-time employment and soldiers returning home will need preparation for peace-time employment. The new workers just entering the labor market will need training. The Civilian Conservation Corps made an excellent training record. It can be useful again. There is no doubt but that the CCC set a new pattern for the most practical kind of education for youth yet developed in this country. It gave youth serious, worthwhile jobs to do. The work done had to conform to blueprints and rigid specifications. It had to stand up under rigid inspections. Young men learned proper work habits and proper work attitudes. They developed skills. Many became cooks, bakers, truck drivers, operators of graders, tractors, jack-hammers, bulldozers and other types of equipment. It was education through daily work, it was learning by doing. In the CCC youth learned to use their hands, to get along with their fellows to take care of themselves. A post-war CCC can be utilized to furnish employment and the right kind of training to young men who temporarily cannot find private employment.

ALL SIGNS POINT TOWARD MAJOR
UNEMPLOYMENT CRISIS AFTER WAR

No one can seriously deny that the ingredients for a major unemployment crisis after the war are in the making. No one can doubt the dire need for constructive post-war conservation work. Past experience emphasizes the large numbers of men will need training in the adjustment of the Nation from a war to a peace economy.

A serious unemployment crisis can be averted or modified by wise planning now by industry and Government. If the Government is to forge a plan to soften the economic shocks of peace, why should not the

early thirties, and accomplished an outstanding conservation job, but it made a tremendous contribution to America's preparations for war.

2. The same economic reasons which prompted initiation of the CCC will be present when the War ends. There will be unemployment among youth, and there will be acute need for an organization which will take men off the unemployed rolls temporarily while the Nation is adjusting to a peace-time status. These men will need more than training because even with the best training there will be a period of time when they will be unable to obtain employment because jobs will not be available. There will be need for an organization which can take care of these men, make worthwhile use of their energies during the period when they cannot find employment elsewhere and fit them at the same time for employment when jobs are available.

Nothing in past history offers any promise of full employment during the post-war economic adjustment to peace-time basis. There is no doubt in my mind but that the number of persons who cannot be employed, not because they have no skills, but because there are no jobs, will run into millions. This being true, the Nation may well make use of the CCC formula at least until the time comes when every young man properly equipped with work skills can find immediate employment.

Past history indicates the wisdom of preparing in advance for eventualities which are certain to occur in the future. This country should face facts and prepare to meet the unemployment crisis effectively, wisely, and as economically as possible. No post-war unemployment program will be complete without a section providing for reopening of the Corps and its use to provide employment and to advance conservation and the preparation of youth for the day when a properly equipped young man can find employment.

The following recommendations, therefore, are made:

(1) Reestablish the Civilian Conservation Corps as a post-war emergency organization to reduce unemployment, to advance essential conservation work, to provide young men with necessary work experience and basic skills and to build up the health, physical stamina, patriotism and national defense usefulness of a substantial portion of the young men who reach working age in the years immediately following the Armistice and are unable to find private employment.

(2) Include the Civilian Conservation Corps unemployment relief, youth training and resource building formula in the national post-war program.

(3) Prepare now a definite organization-operations plan for a future CCC which can be submitted to Congress for consideration immediately, if such action is considered advisable, after the war ends. It is recommended that lessons learned through operation of the Corps be utilized in drawing up a post-war CCC plan. Basic data on the history, operations, results and costs of the pre-war CCC are available in the records of the Director, Civilian Conservation Corps, now in process of transfer to the Bureau of Archives

Such an organization-operations plan might well include (a) an organization plan with charts showing exactly how the program would operate and naming organization or organizations which would be responsible for its operation: (b) a basic operations plan including the size of the new CCC, the number of camps to be operated, the tentative location of camps, the eligibility qualifications for prospective enrollees, the major purposes to be effected through CCC operations, the scope of the program so far as types of conservation work to be undertaken and the responsibilities of the various departments or agencies cooperating in Corps operations, if more than one organization is to be employed: (c) the method of selecting enrollees.

(4) Arrange for the pertinent federal conservation departments to survey the post-war conservation field and prepare, by departments, definite plans for the use of a post-war Corps. Such a plan should outline the essential types of work to be done and make recommendations as to the kinds of work which should be undertaken first.

(5) Make physical development with special reference to the removal of physical defects and the building up of strong rugged bodies, a specific Corps objective. Continue all phases of CCC which contribute to development of first class soldier material and include, if post-war conditions make this advisable, a definite military training program.

The success achieved, as evidenced by official War Department reports, in the development of "splendid soldier material," merits consideration of Corps potentialities in the development of a national post-war program of military training for young men. It is possible that an arrangement could be made whereby the Corps would be tied-in directly to a post-war military training program for young men. Youth might be sent to CCC camps for a definite period prior to entering the military organization for a prescribed period of training. For example, youth might be sent to the CCC for six months and to full time military training under military or naval auspices and control for a second six months.

In assessing the value of the Corps as a national preparedness agency, it is interesting to note that while the Corps was formed as a peace-time work and relief organization, its activities aided greatly in the practical preparation of the United States for the second World War. The outdoor life, the camp discipline, the hard work and the rigorous physical routine which each enrollee was required to follow developed first class soldier material. It is true that the Corps did not teach men to use rifles but it did accustom them to barracks life and teach them to take care of themselves. It taught them discipline and the necessity for prompt obedience to orders. It imbued them with a greater love of country and it gave them opportunity to learn more about the country they later were to be called upon to defend. There is no doubt but that the CCC made a material contribution to the War--a greater one than the average person realizes today.

Instead of regarding the CCC expenditures as funds expended primarily for relief and conservatinn as so many have done, the Nation might well take into account the great value of the Corps preparedness activities. The funds expended on the Corps could well be regarded as a prime investment in national preparedness not only in the development of first class manpower but in the development of natural resources wealth vitally important to the economic conduct of the War.

A glance backward shows the Civilian Conservation Corps as the brightest spot on the whole history of conservation in the United States. It was an oasis in an era in which the words exploitation, heedlessness, extravagance and neglect were the words which best epitomized the Nation's treatment of its timber and top-soil. The CCC was 6,000,000 hands, which otherwise would have been idle, holding back inexorable forces of waste. It represented transmutation of human energy into lasting physical improvements benefiting all the people.

The policy of permitting natural resources to deteriorate was followed for decades and is operating today not withstanding the fact that the future security and welfare of the Nation is inescapably bound-up in its basic, essential resources of water, forests and agricultural and grazing lands. The statute books may be filled with social security legislation but there can be no assurance of security for any American if these basic resources are used up without thought of the future of allowed to deteriorate through neglect and through failure to take remedial steps in time. Long range social and economic planning must

include proper conservation of both our human and natural resources. Revival of the CCC program represents the surest way of assuring a sound conservation program.

Of all the by-products of the depression, the Civilian Conservation Corps may prove to be the most worthy of a permanent place in the American way of life in the years after the War.