

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

camps 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.

