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A Balance Sheet

354

Confidential Report on Camp William James
February 15, 1941

I. Introductory Remark: Our Ambiguities. II. Look from the
"White House". III. Look from the Barracks. IV. The Spirit.
V. Some Hurdles.

I. The Ambiguities

Twelve weeks have passed since we decided to move up to the State Forest in Sharon and to start, under a distinct name, our campaign as Camp William James. Six weeks later, and that means, six weeks ago, our campaign was officially turned into a Government enterprise and thus became, still in embryonic fashion, a cadre of the CCC company in Bellows Falls, Vt., and as the future experiment of the Department of Agriculture, we call it "Camp William James in Construction". The free campaign of volunteers and the administrative unit still are two contributaries to the one stream of democratic self government, and the two waters still retain their different color and direction. Hence, every event in the life of the fifty men involved has a twofold meaning and connotation. And a ledger may well show every step or day in a double light, according to the viewpoint held by the observer. Our balance sheet, then, will have to list one and the same act, here as minus and there as plus. A failure is a failure in the eye of the administrator, but an experience of infinite and fruitful consequences for the movement and, as we shall see, an administrative victory can be an educational derailment. Let us start with the campaign side, and then go to the administrative aspects and in preserving both facets without a single-track bias, I hope to avoid the greatest blunder of logician, oversimplification.

II. Look from the "White House"

We were sixteen in December who united in a group for the experiment. This group was to be and to function as a new but necessary element in the community of the Nine Towns which sponsored us. We gathered in the house up the hill which Mr. Amos jocosely has baptized the White House. (No white paint is left, I am afraid). We received interested boys from existing CCC camps, citizens and families from the surrounding towns who also helped us in our plight caused by a premature winter. We measured 27 below zero, on our third day. Not one of our cars would start. Government officials from Washington, college teachers, friends from New England and New York, superintendants and advisers and officers from CCC camps came. We were recognized by the James family, in a memorable inauguration, before many witnesses, as the authorized heirs of William James' vision. We got the State's consent to occupy the "White House", i.e. the Forester's House, next to the camp site, and from the very start, the fire side in this more than modest building made the main distinction between our start and the usual CCC camp. "Hospitality", rendered by the guests, the newcomers, to the well established members of the American community, has been the energy that has kept us going. Usually CCC camps, like hermits, are shut in in their own life, build up their huts or barracks for themselves. The whole architecture or more correctly, the complete lack of architecture in the existing camps comes from the fact that guests were not thought

of, hospitality was not considered one half of the task of such a new group.

We survived the twenty degrees below zero, frozen water pipes and the absence of any modern facilities in this house. And so we now have proven satisfactorily that the function of hospitality was conceived rightly since it prevailed against all possible odds. Any camp which intends to become integrated into the local community, will have to be prepared by similar group action.

Still, the White House now lies deserted because the government has finally finished the barracks that were expected to be open on January 1 by the middle of February. (The waterpipes in one barrack are not finished now). Our reception or research center, the White House, cannot be kept going now because only by our living there constantly was it possible to survive in it at all. I am expected to sleep in the office of the mess hall on my next visit. The whole weight has at this moment, been shifted to the life in the barracks. The future of this first and essential form of living, must now be decided if the special character of our enterprise is not to vanish.

It is true that the Camp has been able to hold two square dances in the barracks. However, for these shortlived evening entertainments, the Superintendant (who is not responsible for the dynamic elements of our venture) recommends the more easily accessible Town Hall in Sharon, for the future. That would mean the final breakdown of our community function. On the other hand, the

plain campers have come out, in my last conference, to my great surprise, with severe criticism of the fact that guests drive up for an hour or two, and then write us up as though they had come to know us. People who do not give two nights and three days to becoming acquainted with us, have no right to claim that they know us. However, the lack of facilities for staying with us, gives them a glaring excuse for rush visits. This results in a cruel waste of our time and strength. They have not a chance of attempting to penetrate the surface. When we make a real effort to meet them, they should be in a position after leaving, to represent the idea to others, in their true significance. We do not wish their praise or approval, but whether they like us or fight us, they should not be able to say that they have been to the Camp, and at the same time not know what they are talking about.

At the expense, according to Mr. Amos, at from 800 to 1000 dollars, the Forester's House can be turned into a livable place for overnight guests, women as well as men. If we wish to retain our original staying power and convincing quality, this expense must be met. The necessity for such a center was clear from the beginning. It is the visible expression of our attack on the bareness of present day community life in the back hills. And with the building, many other features are intimately connected. A list of incidents, selected at random from an innumerable list, may prove this.

An old Dartmouth Alumnus, Newspaper editor of a conservative

slant, has been asked to write us up in the Reader's Digest, probably one of the most important forums we have to face. I entertained this gentleman in Hanover, was luckily able to introduce three boys to him whom I could unearth in Hanover (one reconvalescent at his parents' home, two in the hospital, one senior fellow of Dartmouth who had shared our life in December). But this old gentleman is cautious and wants to know more. I now must keep up a lengthy correspondence with him, probably travel to Boston to see him, and yet I cannot write him to stay at camp although he would love to come and stay with us.

But as already said before, it is not just the visible home but the principle of hospitality that counts most. And hospitality includes movement from the camp as well as towards it as the following examples will show.

Foundations have become interested in "the potentialities of Council and Camp" as explained in the appended memorandum, under this title. One of the boys had to go to Boston three times to see them, on this matter. When their interest seemed substantial to warrant a council meeting, he had to ascertain the agreement of the Council with my statement, - fortunately, not one word had to be changed - so that he spent several evenings at private homes.

Two boys went to see the Rotary Club in Randolph, our biggest town, and win their confidence. A big write-up was one by-product of this successful expedition.

The soil erosion program had favored the wealthiest farms

foremost and many small farmers not knowing enough about the project, had not signed up. This the boys felt was unjust and two boys explored their situation. One man, from the city with seven children, had just lost his house in a fire. The neighbors, who respected the newcomer for his industry and cheerfulness, had built a shack for the family last fall, after the fire. This man nearly embraced the boys when they came with their offer of labor for his soil erosion. Four more farmers signed up on that day.

Twenty-five members of the Camp went over to the most imperilled town of the nine, - a town that is known to be the weakest in the State having a grand list of 1500 dollars, and 15,000 dollars in delinquent taxes - two excellent boys from this town are in camp. Two representatives from this town were elected to the Council on this occasion. A week later, Camp and Council met at the White House. The Federal Security Agent for this town, Mr. Bickford, a social worker, Mrs. Taylor, Mr. Montgomery, of Farm Security and a Director of United Farmers, Judge Stone, (who could explain the plight of this town historically, and also stress its satisfactory agricultural conditions), Stanley Culbreth, Farm Security Agent from Washington, D. C. and myself spoke. In these two meetings, the CCC boys definitely outlived their function as mere hands or labor. They served in a moral capacity, as citizens, bringing hope back to a community, and as students preparing themselves for their task. No talk about democracy or good citizenship, no mere listening to other people's sessions, can be compared to this immediate integration.

A highly respected farmer from Tunbridge and his son drove up to the Camp one day to speak to us. They had plans of their own, for a work project. More important, this man as a salesman of insecticides, knew every one in these towns. And he reported as follows: "The growing requirements for milk production and the increasing competition hang like a sword over the heads of the hill farmers. They feel that dairying is not the lasting solution. And they expect your Camp to build up the reception center and sheep farm as a model to direct their own next steps ./" I have heard nothing but favorable comments about this plan." Since we cannot comply with this man's own work project, at least not in the form proposed by him, I went the following Saturday with eight boys on a ski and snow shoe trip over the area under consideration. We took our lunch to this friend's home and thus showed him our good will by spending several hours with him and his family/. We then went on to the home of the father of two of our boys. Thereupon this father, on the same day, wrote to the Senator (Aiken of Vermont), the letter that is contained in the Senator's speech.

A distinguished New Yorker had been approached by me. He became so interested that he sent up , at his own expense, a young couple asking them to make an independant study. They spent four days in and around the Camp, and by their visit , the overcritical town of South Royalton was won over. New Combinations, one may say, have clustered around this tiny biological cell .

III. Look from the Barracks

Not one of these stories can seep through the forms and reports now required; all the operations listed here, including gasoline, are paid privately, not by the government. And yet, without them the camp would have to close down. The medical, the educational, the social, the publicity, the political, the technical side of our life during the last six weeks as well as at this moment are resting on both the administrative as well as the free support. When I go up to the camp, to teach the boys or when my wife goes to the camp to recuperate the things which enabled the camp to function, we pay our 13 cents for the meal, and that is all that appears in the report to Washington. Now, I have no objections to paying thirteen cents for an excellent meal. But this is just another instance where the situation is filled with legal fictions.

Certainly the first condition for any experiment is complete congruency between form and content. An experiment can only be expressed within the frame of reference which the experimenters have in mind, in and on its own terms. In a segregational society as industry produces, experimentation is the only way of clearing our brain from a network of coordinates that screen the real relations of our actions. When we insist on keeping the glasses on our eyes which we call rules and regulations, we will never see what actually belongs together, and what does not. The reports that follow the lines of forms developed without the experiment in mind, will do more to hide the processes that go on than to reveal them.

And yet, I can appreciate that the government at first thought it possible to treat the whole process as just a government enterprise. One of our most successful boys was severely reprimanded because he had used his contacts outside the Department to sever the ties of this Camp with Mr. McIntee's office. Having served in it, he knew that Mr. McIntee had refused his own opportunity deliberately. As far as I know, the Department of Agriculture blamed the efforts for making the experiment consistent in form and content instead of taking advantage of the confidence placed in the younger man who did what the Department could not very well do. I am all on the side of the younger man, and I think that he tried to render the Department itself a real service. We hit here on the basis of our division of labor and of our pooling of our various resources for getting things done. It is not surprising that we all should with the tools that every one has at its disposal, once we all admit that we are entrusted with a delegation of powers for a universal problem for which no government agency has the exclusive tools.

When I myself have gone on record that the experiment should not have started before Mr. McIntee had been excluded from it, my reasons are obvious. I must mention one of an especially aggravating character. Mr. McIntee has seen the letter in which a prominent member of our committee has asked the President to dismiss Mr. McIntee. With this knowledge, Mr. McIntee cannot be expected to use his duty of inspection and report and investigating with any degree of fairness. Mr. McIntee stands not alone. Mr. John

Bowen though officially our liaison officer and praising the Camp when checked, says to all his friends in Boston: "this thing can't last. It will smash as I have predicted it must", our Superintendant is Mr. Bowen's friend. He, of course, has not quite this line, but he certainly is not a person who believes in anything. I think that he is an excellent administrator of materials, supplies, etc. And he now waits for the moment when his permanent appointment will free him from regards he now has to pay. But occasionally, it becomes visible how difficult these regards are for him.

He completely keeps away from anything connected with the spirit of the movement. Example: Mr. Lawrence Bowen in Tunbridge had been mentioned as foreman, and waited for an answer. Grave interests were involved because Bowen has done more for the Tunbridge Group than any body else. Mr. Bowen has never gotten an answer. Nor could I get Mr. Amos to take any stand in this matter; he simply went ahead with his own appointments. The importance of communicating with Bowen so this man knew where he stood, Mr. Amos may well have understood; but he does not care for this part of the problem.

Mr. Hendrickson asked me to wait if Mr. Amos favored a news-sheet or not. This correction would be in order if Mr. Amos cared in the least for this whole process. Whether we have 35 new applicants in two or three months, certainly is of no concern to Mr. Amos. Yet, our success in recruiting may well depend on this news sheet, and on Mr. Hendrickson's editorial. Now, it is not

so as though Mr. Amos did not know of our plan for a newssheet and he, of course, approved of it. Otherwise, I would not have written Mr. Hendrickson. Mr. Amos distinguishes strictly between anything he has gotten from Mr. Morrill, and the things done by the boys. The latter, he ignores. I cannot see that his interests coincide with the camp and as long as no one of us has this conviction, we must make our reservations.

Now, the division of labor has worked well in the past. And it makes it possible for all of us to cooperate with complete confidence in each other. But it rests on our admission of the complex character of our delegated task. And by the way, the camp came into being on the recommendation of the National Defense council to the President of the United States. Hence, the experiment does not simply consist in a shift from the Army to Agriculture but in the delegation of a community problem of a new order, to Agriculture as the best and most integrated department and the most vitally interested in human values on a long range basis. As soon as the Department stresses this delegation, it will be able to mobilize the energies of the Defense Council, the President's office, and Public Opinion.

Instead, Mr. Barclay reports from Washington in the New York Times that the exclusion of the army from the experiment has produced the storm, and that the Department of Agriculture wishes to try out "a small soil erosion experiment". Other correspondents are told that "straw bosses" are trained. This was a most unfortunate phrase which logically led to an attack against these boys

on the ground that they wished to get positions with salaries between 1800 and 2800 dollars when in reality they all could secure much more lucrative jobs. Even if they stayed - without this fresh competition of boys from the ranks, every failure now employed would be frozen in for ever - the AYC advocates civil service classification for the whole CCC although not one of all these men has ever served as an enrollee and although all of them are just "overprivileged" without any service whatsoever. The use of the term "straw bosses" in an official utterance had disastrous effects on the camp morale. In this statement, the college boys were clearly lined up against the rest of the boys. Before, such a distinction had never been made. The ensuing confusion cost us five boys who signed out, out of a total of 28 CCC boys, an early fatal loss. I understand very well that these explanations had to be given in order to minimize the importance of the camp and thereby mitigate the opposition fanned by other b

But appeasement does not work. If the camp's aims are departmentalized and minimized, this will only result in Mr. McIntee's success. He will then have isolated the Department of Agriculture from all the innumerable friends of this project in and outside the Government. Take any such friend, and ask how he will react to the statements given out. Herbert Agar was brought to the camp by myself, and he asked me to write about it in "Free America". Now, he has to be shown the significance of the camp within his frame of reference and vocabulary; the very term "straw boss" would

be enough to kill his interest in us completely; we have enough job-hunters. We need Agar, we need Dykstra, we need the local farmers, we need the educators, etc. A division of labor - as it has worked out so far beautifully - should not frighten any one of us.

As it is now, the "investigation" conducted in connection with the astute letter of the Director of the CCC to Mr. Morrill of November 12th, 1940, has deprived the members of Camp William James of their power, to call everything with the right name. They had to put in writing that they were "needy". Now, our whole experiment is based on the assumption that they were not needy. The Department of Agriculture had its chance here to insist that every boy filled out the form under "reason for enrollment": "because I wished to serve my country". This, after all, was and is the truth. Now if this answer had been given unanimously, neither Mr. McEntee nor Mr. Engel would have survived the ridicule if they had tried to dismiss the boys from this statement or to blame Agriculture for its Selection.

The whole investigation as it was handled, could not be understood by the enrollees, and left a sour taste in their mouths, of hypocrisy and confusion.

A similar point is the strange vocabulary which we allow to be used in public debate. The terms labor service and work camps become opposed to CCC. The Communists attack Work Camps, Mr. Engel attacks Labor Service, as though the CCC were not a labor service and work camps. The CCC is a work service, or I do not

know what this term means. For one half of the boys who have nothing to fall back on and whose family is on relief, it is compulsory. It is a legally camouflaged compulsion, but nevertheless strict economic compulsion because Juvenile Courts and Social Workers practically compel their clients to join the CCC.

Now, by allowing Mr. Engel or the New Masses to play up the label Work Service and Labor Camps as something foreign and horrid, in contrast to the existing CCC, it is difficult to keep the record straight. On the record, we already have a work service, on the basis of temporary relief. The only question is: will it be dropped? will it develop into another mechanized machine as the army or our factory system by becoming compulsory (Voorhis bill, H. R. 10430 August 28, 1940) or will it save us from ossification by turning in the opposite direction by releasing the creative energies in these youngsters and in our old people in the land, by the admixture of volunteers.

The issue is still open. Six months from now, it may have been decided in favor of another huge branch of Government, without any spiritual movement behind it. We have a fair chance of winning the many good people that favor compulsory civil service, to a broader understanding of the potentialities they would choke. They usually say that volunteering is nice but that the boys who would need the service experience most would never get it.

I offer this story, in refutation. When I was sent to England to study Adult Education methods, I found that under the Fisher Act a great system of professional training schools were developed.

In Germany, at that time, we had compulsory schools for all working youth between 14 and 18. And we boasted of 100% efficiency, through this compulsion. But it was a fact that the police and the courts had no end of trouble in fining boys, bosses and parents, and that the dross wore heavy on the classes because in every one of them, saboteurs would paralyze the instruction, by their laziness, indifference or open hostility. In Yorkshire, the voluntary system attracted 92% of the children living in the area. The dross was kept out. Every pupil was happy to participate. The efficiency was much higher than under the German system. 100% participation on the surface, and real participation of 92% is our choice. And 100% compulsory participation in a work service, is meaningless to me, when we have to fight disintegration and segregation for our bare survival. We should win all the good people who from a sense of duty and concern, support the compulsory program, to our line of thought by making clear what they would miss, under compulsion. The reluctance of the Department of Agriculture to make it clear that this Camp is experimental, leads to the situation that the CSC which in 1935 was set up merely as the Clearing House between Army, Agriculture, and Interior, now exercises its rights as a Clearing House between Agriculture and Agriculture.

I now will give a list of instances illustrating the situation. 'One camp pays us', - as the boys and Mr. Amos say -, 'one camp doctors us, a third camp feeds us. The camp that feeds us seems to be folding up; thus, we get the hind end of an already poor business. The fact that another camp doctors us, made it necessary

to drive fifty miles in an open truck to get the typhoid vaccination. The boys were so frozen, on arrival, that the doctors ordered them to stay over lunch time. However, on the way back, the cold was again so great that four out of seven were laid up with 102 and 103 degrees of fever, and had to be sent to the hospital. The camp that pays, Bellows Falls, if it should render the service of washing - as prescribed by rules and regulations - would not be obliged to return the new sheets given out to Camp William James from the Depot, but would certainly send back old and used sheets. At this moment, the Camp tries to have as few changes in sheets as possible, for this reason.'

The ski problem - as you remember the acquisition from public funds was first considered and then denied - was solved by self help. Eighteen old pairs of skis were given to the camp by Dartmouth students. Thirty new outfits - hickory skis, wonderful ski-boots, poles, bindings, were bought by the boys for 8 dollars each, (less than one third) after skillful negotiations with a ski store in Hanover, from their pay roll. This brings up another lamentable slip in our CCC vocabulary which has made, I take it, trouble for nearly all of us in the recent controversy, and in interviews with outsiders.

When the CCC was under consideration, in 1933, the most prominent labor leader of that time, exclaimed in disgust that the richest country of the world offered its citizens, in this Corps, one dollar a day, as a living wage. It was this misunderstanding of a Corps paying wages that has undermined the morale of the CCC

after the first years of enthusiastic beginning. Now, we are back to the pay roll standard, for this branch of Government. Not only is a long period of service broken up quite unwarrantedly into single days by this naive imitation of factory methods; it also is completely forgotten that the enrollee is an investment on the part of the nation. His pay of one dollar a day is one third of the expense incurred for him. And fifty percent of his pocket money goes to his family which would receive this same amount anyway. It would be much wiser to say that the CCC boy gets 2.50 a day, out of which fifty cents is daily pocket money. The whole term 'wage' is disastrous as many conversations with outsiders show. For instance, a month ago the League of Women Voters sent out a questionnaire about the CCC. All that this well meaning document asks about the economic idea behind the CCC, is the question: "What wages are paid?" Asked in this fashion, the question must lead to a complete misunderstanding in the minds of those women voters. The economic meaning of the CCC has nothing to do with the 50 cents in pocket money, paid or not paid, reduced or increased. But the public only stares at the label "wage". I have drawn attention to this, in my addresses to the Educational Advisers of the CCC, in May 1940.¹ Later, indeed Mr. McIntee split the pocket money into seven dollars for a saving account, and eight dollars in cash. The whole investment in the boy is an investment of government c a p i t a l, not of a wage (which would have to be calculated in the price of the commodity produced). As a capital

1. The text of these speeches is appended.

investment, it is a lump sum, despite its being paid in instalments.

The Camp is not entitled to a library or a canteen, under the rules, as a mere side camp of Bellows Falls. Since it is not a company with its own record, the boys who are in CCC camps since last October, are now required to decide, by a written declaration, if they wish to quit in six weeks or to stay on for another six months. They are asked to make this decision after six weeks at Camp William James. Every army officer, every employer, knows that after six weeks comes the most critical moment for a man in a new environment. It is unfair to ask a written vote of confidence from these boys now and to make them sit up and wonder when they have had to live in a much poorer barrack than in their former camp, with no facilities for cleanliness, or with their bed in the forester's house (before the second barrack was ready), with no instruction and no prospect of promotion since our budget simply is unknown, with the work centering at first exclusively around their own barracks, and last but not least even though they were happy, with their parents confounded by the headlines and captions in the tabloid press. The company clerk from Bellows Falls dropped in one night with the form. Two of our best boys signed out, both thoughtful and articulate leaders, one led the discussion with myself on the educational program. Mr. Amos made no attempt to stop this procedure thinking it inevitable since we are a side camp. The boys were just uncertain and also hurt because of the "straw

bosses" which set them off from the college men. How many such losses in our founding capital can we afford?

As you know the boys that had had to sign that they would not enlist again for six months, Enno Hobbing and George Philips, have been allowed in by Mr. McEntee. They had to live at their own expense at the Forester's house because the camp was not open for them until this permission came through. The expense was met partly by them although one of them has no means, partly by private funds. It is another example how this camp is composed. This same Enno Hobbing who could not get pay was immediately afterwards camp manager again without any remuneration that would have made up for his losses. Many similar sacrifices have been made, by individuals in the camp, except by the staff. The exclusion of the staff from this spirit is a mystery to me. Mr. Amos does take and start his meal with the foremen, independant from the boys although in the same room. The camp manager synchronizes the beginning of the meals for all the rest.

Now, we have a new problem. The boys who are completing their twenty third year cannot sign up again. They are in part our most prominent founders. Then there are candidates from the outside with special qualification, as one architect of 25 who is willing to serve from the bottom up. The law would force us to pay this newcomer as an assistant foreman when the men who have sacrificed long before him are simple enrollees. On the other hand, he could do a swell job, for the development of all our projects

in and outside the camp because the forms hitherto developed for the CCC, are simple imitations of army barracks, and army barracks, of course, treat their environment as a hostile country.

The little group which we have must develop a specially strong esprit de corps. One of the boys was a leader in a group of eight with whom he joined us. As night guard, in trying to crank the snow plow (so that it might work in the morning, each car had to be cranked hourly, during night since no garage was ready), this boy broke his arm. We would have liked to see him go to the Hanover Hospital where the four Flu cases were sent because in this way he could have stayed in contact with all of us, and his influence would have become even stronger since this is the privilege of any invalid. With his arm broken, he was perfectly free to stay often in my house or even visit the camp. Not at all. The army hospital at Fitchburg, Mass. has swallowed him up, for reasons of economy. From our point of view, this is a very uneconomic waste of moral energy which will, if repeated, have deplorable repercussions. The CCC treats the boys as anonymous numbers. We have tried to treat them as persons. Hospital treatment is enough to crush the spirit of even mature people, let alone a boy and had entered into this adventure only three weeks before, and was a victim of his special zeal for the good cause, in sub-zero weather at night.

However, the solution will be difficult. Already the attacks against the 'overprivileged' makes the doctors in the Hanover Hospital think that these "rich" boys should pay high fees. Could not the

first aid man come to the camp now - first aid instruction is most desirable - and a special arrangement be made with Hanover, Mary Hitchcock Clinic since we would save money on the doctor? The lack of a unified budget conceals the great economy now observed in our medical care. One of the fathers of campers took in several reconvalescents and we have also done so constantly, without pay.

Then in all frankness may it be stated that Mr. Amos and Mr. Culbreth as well had to be introduced to our problem, in a very delicate and slow manner. For instance, we expected to have Mr. Culbreth here as a technical expert, for sheep, resettlement, cost, techniques. Instead, he came with his community plan - twelve couples inviting each other regularly to House Parties after the model of the Oxford Group - whereas the practice of the Tunbridge Group as well as the theory of the Camp were far advanced when compared to his abstract scheme. His enthusiasm and wonderful grasp have made it a pleasure to work with him. But the boys went through some very grim days when he preached to them a mere scheme after they had experience and success on their side already. And we have not gotten far on hours, men, costs, materials, for our work projects, either from Mr. Amos or Mr. Culbreth. I could not help them in their publicity problems, and had to learn from their management in many ways.

So, it is only fair to report that the patience of the boys with the shortcomings of us adults was more heavily taxed than our

patience with them. And whereas the fiction was that the adults were in charge, the adults were slowly initiated into what this was all about. The remarkable thing is that they are the best of friends with each other, after that.

I would have liked to see the superintendant be stricter in matters of cleanliness and being on time, from the very beginning; this probably would have been wrong, for the lack of warm water and the shortage of basins made dressing and shaving exceedingly difficult, and with the latrine being out in the fields, far away, life was not easy.

IV. The Spirit

Now, on the positive side, this may be said. The high spirit of the group was in terrible danger when we were scattered in our housing, in the worst time of the year, with the flu raging, the newcomers confused, the Superintendant anxious to wait and see, etc., etc.; the time element involved was not appreciated by the administrative officers. This time element is hard to define but for any movement, it is essential to exploit the available free time of its members. Now, the boys in camp had begun to think of their service as practically starting on October 1, 1940, and stretching out from there on over nine months. Thus, the six months from January 1 to June 30, they considered as their essential contribution. Obviously, their calendar does not coincide with the calendar of the Camp as a Government enterprise. As a government experiment, Camp William James is still in construction. Only when the Camp has become a company, can we say that the experiment is really under way. Will we then have the manpower of volunteers left for the real experiment?

I would now make bold to assert that the fight against all the obstacles enumerated - and many other smaller items - has strengthened the ties inside of the camp. That the obstacles have been overcome, and that the spirit is rising again. Every one of the boys has grown in stature as a number of impartial observers have told me and as I myself can affirm. With many the transformation is clearly visible in new faces and bearing. The elections

of camp managers and council showed a remarkable grasp, and have been successful. The work projects are satisfactory, the Council has a definite plan, the incorporation of Council and Camp, Inc. with Dorothy Canfield Fisher as one of the Incorporators, by the Secretary of State of Vermont, opens up possibilities for permanency. The hunger for a program of instruction has been awakened among the campers themselves. Thus, there is no danger that the educational program will remain anything external. The CCC boys are taken in more and more into the operations of the free campaign, and the college group is completely integrated in the daily routines.

Music became an essential element in our first camp period. Then, the 23 boys from the construction crew, from Bellows Falls who shared our life for a part of January, and who represented the average CCC boy who is accustomed to spend his free time on his bunk dozing or disappears for the week-end into a completely segregated environment, dampened the fervor of the singers by their sarcasm. Some of our own boys became discouraged. Now, singing is gaining ground again. Twelve boys represent the male part in the otherwise purely feminine choir of the congregational church at South Strafford, four miles from our camp. A quartett is doing advanced work, under the leadership of a former glee club president, at Harvard. The week-end problem is well in hand; for instance, a fortnight ago most boys went to a dance at Norwich. Five, however, insisted on their right to go as they were used to, on their

own, in White River Jct. When they heard the description of the night with our good people of Norwich, these five openly regretted that they had not gone with the others.

We have no angels in the Camp. There is at least one case, unidentified so far, who indulges in obscene latrine inscriptions, again a standard CCC practise, but quite exceptional in Camp William James.

The management tries to encourage boys from the neighborhood so that they may take one of their pals home, over the week-end. This would be the ideal way of spending the days off, but it is not easily achieved. First, it is difficult to get the boys to think this up; hereafter, the parents don't see why they should invite these boys. But the idea is assiduously spread, and has been realized in a few cases. The Head of the cooperative eating club of Dartmouth students worked last year with the CCC boys in the former side-camp at Sharon. Comparing his experiences now when the William James boys stop on a Sunday trip for a game or show in Hanover, and those a year ago with the old camp, he writes: "...But you can't treat the unemployed as the psychologist would have us. It can't be dole or soup kitchen. It is our duty to live with people, work with them, share with them and gain the potential which will develop. My experience with the CCC has shown this fact well. Meeting with the boys from Downer State Forest last year, it was impossible to make real friends or meet on the right basis. Try as we would we could not break away from the

approach of the curious psychologist. Yet twice in the last few weeks, groups of boys from Camp William James have come to eat their sandwiches in our Co-op after a game or movie. There is no more of this shifting feet and downcast eyes and mumbled words. These boys (new boys) have met me and other co-op men with (well I hope you understand) j o y and spirit."

As to the spirit, I wish to end with three examples before turning to the future.

One example concerns the work, one the community, one the discipline.

Yesterday, Mr. Amos turned to me at dinner and said: "These boys work too hard. They got eleven loads of dirt out of the garage this morning. It is incredible."

The second example is known to you from Senator Aiken's speech. It is the radiant success of the square dance as reported in Mr. Flint's letter quoted in the Congressional Record, in full. In addition, I would like to say that although certainly other camps have held dances, the number of girls nearly equalled the number of boys, in our case. And this is no mean achievement.

The third case is even of more recent date and I, in my work with the camp, hope to profit greatly from it. The Camp voluntarily has voted to get up one quarter of an hour earlier, that is at 5:45 and to complete the morning routines before the breakfast at 6:30. In this way, a full hour is gained between breakfast and work, and I know from long experience that this is the genuine

hour of the day in which a man can be started thinking. It is the time for concentration and recollection, and next Wednesday I shall build into this hour an address (prepared the previous evening in a discussion).

What are our assets outside the camp?

Many more people have become interested in us, through the attacks on the experiment. The local group now would not give up the cooperative idea even though the government would now withdraw. The necessary development of Farm Security collaboration with CCC, and vice versa, has become self-evident. The desire of the farmers to make use of the Camp as a reservoir for their labor shortage has become more and more a common place the more we have insisted that even now boys interested in the camp should first move on individual farms and prove themselves there. (Two men are at this moment working on farms.)

V. Some Hurdles

Our next big problem is increase of the Camp to about 80, on April 1st. The reason for this lies in the fact that the overhead of a camp of 42, as it is now, is the most unfavorable. Night guard, fireguard, cook, K.P., first aid man, company clerk, etc., take a heavy toll from our numbers. The efficiency of such a set up cannot possibly compare favorably with the efficiency of a camp of 180 men. It cannot be the purpose of this experiment to imitate slavishly the figure of 180 of the regular CCC. But as long as we are less than 60, we cannot even be a company, under the existing rules of CCC. The recruiting of the remaining 35 men is a special problem. It will be more difficult because of the attacks. Although they have welded together the camp, they may have interrupted the natural flow of candidates. One mother actually called her son home, on account of them, very much against his will. But he was only eighteen, and she could not stand the remarks of her neighbors who all read the tabloids.

The building of the Reception Center will make certain that this camp is an experiment meant to influence public opinion and administration on the question of civil service. Therefore, the money for the White House should not be taken from the very small appropriation for the running work projects of 2400 dollars for material, gasoline, etc. now available. It is primary investment.

The budget is unknown yet. Especially the salary for an educational adviser should be made transferable so that we can pay

for a really first rate teacher in mechanics, in soils and photography, or whatever else develops. For the time being English history, sociology, civics, ethics, philosophy, will be taken care of without expense. Seven weeks ago we were promised the photo-stats of the Census of the nine towns. We were told that they were ordered. We ordered a number of publications. We only got those that are cost free.

We need book catalogues. So far, the Department has only furnished us with a catalogue of its own publications. We should be allowed to choose among all government publications.

The international aspects of a Work Service for the Western Hemisphere, especially for the relations between Canada and the United States should be constantly kept in mind. These aspects alone suffice to show why work service is not a relief organization for the underprivileged. It is representative of an integration of people, for common work of a long range character, and for a training of young men for the good life, in a mechanized and industrialized society which, merely by its principles, produces segregation constantly. The segregational trends of a specialized, market-seeking society are a world wide problem. They can be dodged by relief and stagnation as in France or England, they can be exploited for war and revolution as in Central Europe. But they also can be directed to the construction of the social carburetor as one of the CCC boys, a truck driver, put it in his speech before the Rotarians. This carburetor would mix the elements of our

society again so that we have not to fear either the violent wholesale explosion of a revolution or the indolence of segregated and helpless social elements. The construction of innumerable small explosion motors, with inner combustion, should seem natural in an era of Ford cars. If we succeed in connecting the farmers old, the campers young, and the integration of our economy, with each other, the elements would so be mixed that Nature might stand up and say to all the world, 'this is a people'!

Camp William Jones

1

WORKPROJECT.

(II).

-1b-

Slow integration. obvious large margin of dissent as to aims and means. I am willing to try to cooperate for. a four months or a half year and I consider these months as especially valuable for me so that I may learn the viewpoints of the group (?). I think that the welding together of this committee itself is our first goal. And I feel that today's agenda are two ambitions at this moment before the committee itself has become a workable unit. It is far from being this. Let me quote one example.

Gentlemen, I have been very slow in *surrendering* my other activities. I do this because I know how to do it, not because I have nothing else to do. And because the boys expect me to do it. I have been drafted by them. My obligation lies with them and the friends who have faith in me.

Unified command versus field for free creative action.

Unified command is a slogan to me of doubtful value. Unified departmental authority yes. Unified budget yes. Unified dictatorship - unreal. My own example as commander / during -2- December. Colonel Hanbury-Sparrow. The boys themselves. Why?

No good boss makes an invention. However, he must be in a safe position to do this kind of thing: let youth make mistakes.

Ski example.

Solidarity with workers. /

REPORT ON WORKPROJECT. (III)

-3-

Senate Water Resource Committee

1. R.E.A. Power Companies. Study
2. Woodwork Camp
3. Staff center State property
4. Settler's Reception Center
5. Soil erosion program

on Past

Report on Dec. 2 to Dec. 31.

For the first time all together.

Double purpose inner lifeline and outer contacts.

Experience with CCC, officials with rookies, farmers, students, saw with dismay moving in of army and labor with satisfaction, William James celebration:

misunderstanding about democratic process. One does not vote in ones grandfather's name. Solemnity and gaiety.

hardship at 25 below.

2 cars mined, on skis. Command, work, apprenticeship, music and table manners. /

This month of December, then an absolutely essential -4- part of any camp. This is the first lesson learned, whereas the period on which we are entering, of untested value. Benefit of doubt: inclined to let itself work out. /

PROPOSAL

SECRET (IV) OR BELOW

-5-

life experiment in time Eduard Lindeman
6 weeks; experiment delayed Camp Company
problem of availability of students and myself for more than six
months, already far in excess of 1000 of your 1000
At transferability illusion Spread highly desirable may be on
paper. Any scheme omits the real energies
in our case 1. Special adviser
2. Council of 9 towns
3. Friends of Camp William James

two concepts confused. The first camp cannot be put up as repeatable. That was the idea in 1910 (?) from which we are suffering. Now there is no reason why ^{any} should not get the Bear Lake Mountain Association, some Mountain Youth in West Va and the Quakers in the same shape. Memo of Jan. 15, 1939. Two years ago, got nowhere. Obvious mistakes made by us, all to the good, from an educational view point. I personally feel that mere repeatability would deprive camp III, 101 (or: 1 to 19) of their honour and value. They can be speeded up, intensified by us and will be. It is obvious that we have to keep three things in common which I should hold to be enough to establish collaboration effectively. Mr. McEntee is out to destroy this thing.

The Defense and Preparedness program is responsible that we have been successful, with our petition and the Department, with its forward looking policy. Leadership even though not aspired at by us, must come from this group. The apathy of College leaders and college students.

Leaders cannot be trained because they rise. But I can train a certain set of people because it is safe to say that out of them leaders will rise. /

Duties of Superintendent all on paper ~~nothing~~ ~~nothing~~ ~~nothing~~
Publicity for example. I have written no article--Why not?
Mr. Olmstead is going to write one, Arlie Childs has to write the
news sheet for the White River chain of local papers. The
superintendent probably least qualified and least interested in
publicity and most ignorant of need.

A paper of notes for consultation on Camp William James. Found in Four Wells during my stay there from May 17th till June 10 1993. The paper is not complete, starts with p. 1-b-7 pp. 1941. Uncertain words in the manuscript are indicated with: (?). Title and typescript by Lisé Silvannoder Molén, Winsum, The Netherlands (August 16, 1993). 2 pages.

This month of December, then an absolutely miserable part of any camp. This is the first lesson learned, whereas the period on which we are entering, of untested value. Benefit is obtained as far as small work goes.