

PURPOSE OF CAMP WILLIAM JAMES

Camp William James is engaged in voluntary work service, that is to say, the camp is doing work because the work is service to the communities roundabout and to the country at large, work which would not be done unless we did it, work which is not very rewarding to the laborers in terms of dollars, but which will pay ample dividends in terms of long-run benefits to Vermont communities and the security and strength of America.

We are doing this work because we realize that it has to be done if the American commonwealth is to survive in prosperity and freedom: if everyone pursued his own private interests and failed to contribute in a substantial way to the common good, we would soon cut each other's throats and America would be laughed at as another democracy that failed because its people refused to cooperate with each other when there was still time to pull together. So we might be regarded as part of an army that is fighting, during peacetime, against the kind of civil war which we have been witnessing in Europe.

Camp William James has been called a "youth movement" and surely no one will deny that it is made up of young men and that its appeal is to the younger generation. But why should it be otherwise? Is it not clear that the simple fact that we have more time to live than our elders, in itself explains why we must be so vitally concerned with the preservation of a worthwhile future for America? We do not wish to grow up in the midst of decaying natural resources, dying communities, idle factories and useless jobs. We want, for ourselves and for our families, a country in which men freely cooperate for the common good of all. And so, during this brief interval after our schooling, and before we settle down to family life and a steady

career, we are banding ourselves together for voluntary public service.

The jobs we do are in response to obvious community needs: first of all, in working on farms in and around Tunbridge, we are helping to overcome a shortage of seasonal agricultural labor: we are helping to limit the absurdity of young men without respected employment on the one hand and farmers without sufficient support to keep their families and communities going, on the other. Secondly, we have accomplished a few jobs designed to conserve land and water resources for future generations: this work is outside the ordinary economic system, but it is the kind of work that will enable this section of the United States to look forward with confidence to a future in which there shall be an economic system. For poor land means poor men.

In a sense, we're the dirty-work squad, the boys who take the jobs nobody else wants. If we were not here, we would be unemployed, or on relief, or, worse yet, we might be holding down useless jobs which only put an added strain on the purse and patience of the American people. Instead, we have chosen to make of our lack of skill and family responsibilities and our non or malemployment an asset. We have formed the nucleus of an army of volunteers, volunteers for the building and the re-building of the American commonwealth.

Viewed from another light, we are the future assembled, for we young men come from all parts of the country and from different walks of life. We are trying to get along peacefully and constructively, amongst ourselves and with our neighbors. Mobilized for service, we are taking each other's measure, and trying to plan for ourselves lifetimes that will bring rewards to ourselves and also earn the respect of our friends present and future. This camp cannot become a school or a university in the usual sense, but it can, if it but have

he right spirit, induce its members to take time out to think in long-range terms. The lives of each one of us must serve as stable foundation posts for the edifice of the American future. And so, when we fail ourselves and each other, by doing the short-sighted thing, by building on sand instead of on rock, our failure must be regarded as important and as a threat to the entire enterprise in which we are engaged. We must try to secure the skills of mind and hand that will be of enduring value. We must make a constant effort to separate the thing that is real and lasting from the thing that is cheap, momentary, and deceiving.

The cooperative resettlement of abandoned farms, the introduction of new sources of income for this region, changes in government policy - all these larger objectives can be fulfilled - if we remain steadfast in our sense of responsibility. Not all of us can remain here for long periods of time. But all of us should be able to carry away from here something that will endure, so that when we leave we may leave as representatives of something that is larger than ourselves. Then, wherever we are, the things for which we stand will be strengthened, and this camp may grow and come to mean more and more as the years roll by.

America is on the verge of entering the Second World War. After this conflict is over, there will be a great depression and a great disillusionment and there may be fighting in the streets of our cities. Our thoughts must not shrink from the horrible prospect of the years that may follow. By building securely now, for ourselves and our communities and our faith in humankind, we may be able to help

preserve the best elements of the American heritage. Camp William James cannot be content to exist as a merely local or temporary event. It must dig itself in, to be sure, and it must mean something here and now. But it must multiply and reproduce itself. It must be worth multiplying and reproducing. To make it worthy of all these things is our present task.

the farmers old through the triple A, the extension services, etc.; the settlers new through FSA, the campers through the CCC. We now ask it to contemplate the potentialities of a perpetual interplay between these three groups. Only if the government releases their creative powers can these groups stimulate each other mutually in a common effort.

For this purpose these groups must be allowed to face each other and to cooperate with each other. Financially, it would be necessary to recognize that funds for Extension Service, Resettlement and CCC may supplement each other. For example, while a loan can be given to a subcommercial farm by FSA, CCC cannot protect and increase the security of this loan by curing the desperate shortage of labor on this same farm. The AAA offers phosphate and lime and plans programs for the farmers to plant legumes which shall retain and enrich the soil; they should also strengthen the human fabric by admixing youthful and educated helpers to the old-timers. Many more farmers would make use of the AAA programs if somebody could put the lime on their fields. And the conservation of the soil is not their individual concern; it is of national importance. While they build new houses and even community centers and town halls, they do not fill them with significance and dignity, which only comes from the banding together in unselfish companies. The CCC is for the needy and pays relief wages, and by this false vocabulary, the green uniform does not invest its carrier with the distinction of a voluntary servant. The members of Camp William James were not allowed to

state in the questionnaire the simple truth: that they wish to serve their country. They have to profess that they are 'needy'. These barriers of law and indolence are untenable.

We feel certain that as soon as the government becomes conscious of the segregational trends of its present policy, it will abandon them. Pigeonhole a man, and his stature shrinks. We also are positive that the people of Vermont and American youth are ready for and sympathetic to the vital integration between Council and Camp as here proposed.

If we do not exploit these qualities all three, stability of the integrated community, mobility of the adventurous youth, and eagerness to get settled of the young married couples, we must abandon all hope of keeping either our country well populated or our population well settled. No other way has been shown us by which to satisfy the needs of human nature and of economic change, simultaneously.