

JAMES H. ROWE, JR. PAPERS

Administrative Assistant to the President
1938 - 1941

Civil Service Commission: N -

Congress of Industrial Organizations

Cont. 9

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON January 29, 1941

Memorandum For The President.

CCC

The problem of CCC has received increasingly serious attention. The confidential Committee report and the American Youth Commission's report reached the same conclusions. The Budget Director more or less agrees with these reports, as do the Departments involved, with the exception of McEntee.

The private, and unanimous premise is that McEntee must be removed.

You suggested this might be done indirectly by combining CCC and NYA by administrative order and by putting McEntee in a subordinate position. Wayne Coy and his lawyers and I have reached the conclusion this cannot be done except by legislation.

Coy could tighten his administrative control over McEntee with the hope of forcing him out, but he says frankly this would have very little effect on McEntee.

John Carmody has suggested to you that CCC be transferred to the Works Agency and its basic philosophy changed. I have discussed it with Carmody and have read his memorandum. I don't think his idea deserves any kind of consideration because his Agency has advanced no good reason for the transfer.

Recommendations:

(1) If and when the reorganization authority is extended, the next reorganization plan should provide for combining NYA and CCC into a youth service. I understand this will be held until passage of the Lease-Lend Bill.

(2) The crucial situation is the Army's withdrawal of its Reserve Officers from the Camps. This is an immediate problem. The quality of the Officers has never

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been high. Today the substitutes are 50% poor. Three months from now they will be worse. Replacement must be by civilians and the Sharon Camp experiment to train leaders should be expanded rapidly.

For political reasons, the request to withdraw Reserve Officers should come publicly from General Marshall to you. This would remove much of the suspicion that CCC is being turned over to amateur experimenters.

(3) However, the Army should be allowed two semi-military Camps in each Corps Area to be organized as non-combatant military units. The attached memorandum from Henry Stimson should be approved.

James Rowe, Jr.

January 31, 1941

Memorandum For Mrs. Roosevelt.

Sharon Camp

You may not have seen this column in the Star. Please note the marked portion.

I have suspected that McEntee "leaked" this story. At any rate, his share in this experiment has been one of complete mulish obstinacy. He has been told several times that Agriculture had control of the Camp. His entire attitude is the one most important thing wrong with CCC.

I have hesitated to suggest to you that Congressman Engel, who is a Republican, might be educated if you talked to him.

He is a rather strange person who goes "sleuthing" around various departments looking for examples of money wasting. He is quite sincere. He is important, since he is the ranking Republican on the Subcommittee.

I had one indirect experience with him when he was attacking Pare Lorentz' "Fight for Life". At that time Governor McNutt gave him a special preview of the picture and after seeing it he was quite enthusiastic about it.

Perhaps if you talk to him about the William James Camp, he might once again become a proponent. Yet I hesitate to recommend this as it might make matters worse.

The important point is McEntee's behavior, about which the President will have to do something soon. I believe McEntee can be handled through a reorganization plan if and when the time limit is extended.

James Rowe, Jr.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D. C.

February 6, 1941

CONFIDENTIAL

Mr. James H. Rowe
Administrative Assistant to the President
The White House

Dear Jim:

The Sharon CCC camp situation has developed to a point where I feel a report to you is needed. The camp was opened in early January and since then the enrollees have been working on the buildings and camp site. We expect them soon to branch out into soil conservation work and other work projects. I am attaching our latest list of the enrollees and information relative to them. Our reports indicate good morale at the camp and pretty rapid progress on the work at hand.

We had a number of new features with which to experiment in this camp including unified command, better education, better relations with the community and more enrollee participation in camp management, but predominant has been and is the training of enrollees for future leadership within the CCC. The Alexander Committee recommended three demonstration camps for this purpose but we have made no move to establish more than the one at Sharon. Our general research objective is to get some documented conclusions as to the best method of training for supervisory positions in the CCC in the future. One of the possibilities frequently suggested is the establishment of a staff college--a "West Point for the CCC." Frankly, we have some doubts about this method of training for this particular purpose, but assuming that the need for a staff college was decided in the affirmative, it would seem to be an excellent way of using the Rogers Estate.

There is an immediate controversy over the Sharon camp that apparently must be resolved before we can hope for any constructive result. The Director of the CCC, as you probably know, is out of sympathy with the experiment. Congressman Engel and others have made critical statements regarding it and yesterday I was called before Judge Tarver's sub-committee of the Appropriations Committee for a hearing on the Sharon camp. Mr. McEntee presented a report from one of his investigators which was obviously slanted toward discrediting the Sharon camp. Mr. McEntee took a position in opposition to the experiment. That development puts us in a difficult spot. The backers

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of the camp are prosecuting numerous ideas for experimental work projects; the Department of Agriculture is prosecuting a much smaller number of ideas and the Director of the CCC is giving the camp standard CCC treatment. There are a few things proposed to be done which are entirely consistent with CCC law and regulations. Some of the ideas advanced are clearly beyond the authority in the CCC Act. A third and broader area than either of these is things which might be done under the law or under a sympathetic interpretation of regulations which cannot be done by the Department without the cooperation of the Director. On the one side we are confronted with a critical attitude of the Director of Mr. McEntee and on the other by a growing feeling of disappointment among the promoters of the camp. Indicative of this latter point I'm attaching a copy of a letter from Mr. N. P. Dodge, Chairman of Nine Towns Council, Tunbridge, Vermont.

As you probably know, in order to carry out the ideas we thought the President had in mind when he asked that this camp be opened, we prepared a cooperative agreement to be signed by the Secretaries of Agriculture and War and the Federal Security Administrator. We did not make an effort to get it signed but, on request, sent it to the Budget Bureau. At the hearing yesterday Mr. McEntee introduced a copy of the agreement and a letter from the Federal Security Administrator indicating that it could not be signed because administrative authority over the CCC was vested in the Director of the Corps rather than the Federal Security Administrator. The legal point seems basic to the reorganization order under which CCC was put in the Federal Security Agency, but that's a matter we can't handle.

Most of this letter is simply information in which I think you'll be interested. The one clear point that I think you'll need to think about is the fact that we find it extremely difficult and probably impossible to carry out the President's request successfully unless we have either the sympathetic cooperation of the Director of the CCC or full authority to act on our own responsibility--which may not be legally possible.

I am going away for a month on a field trip and during that time my assistant will report to you any developments.

Best regards.

Sincerely,

P. H. Appleby
Paul H. Appleby
Under Secretary

Enclosures

CONFIDENTIAL

February 20, 1941

Memorandum For Mrs. Roosevelt.

Sharon Camp

You know of course the latest developments with respect to the Sharon Camp, particularly the letter which McEntee sent to Agriculture officials informing them he was transferring the jurisdiction of the camp to the War Department.

You may not know that McEntee told Governor McNutt he was going to do this, that McNutt gave him definite and clear instructions not to do any such thing, that McEntee went ahead anyway, and that McNutt has written him a scorching letter asking for an explanation.

Yesterday I told the President about this, and have discussed it with Wayne Coy, Appleby, Olmstead, Jim Lannigan etc. I gave the President my analysis, with which I think he agrees and which is simply this:

The one single factor which is rapidly ruining the CCC is McEntee. Every informed person, including the American Youth Commission, the confidential committee which reported to the President, and all the officials who handle CCC matters know this and many of them have told the President so. As long as McEntee is Director neither the Sharon Camp nor any other intelligent rebuilding or training program can succeed.

McEntee is of course aware of all this criticism and is, I suspect, also aware that the President knows of it. During the campaign, he once offered his resignation which unfortunately was not accepted. The whole background of the Congressional investigation of the Sharon Camp and these latest developments indicate, at least to me, that McEntee is deliberately provoking the President into action against him.

I believe developments have now reached the purely political stage and that McEntee should be handled politically and no other way.

In other words, McEntee knows he is on the way out and has picked his issue. If the President tries to remove him on the issue of the Sharon Camp, the atmosphere will be clouded with irrelevant emotionalism and sensational newspaper stories centering around the Harvard boys and also the irrelevancy that Hussy happens to be a German alien at the moment. I also understand there are certain things in the administration of the Sharon Camp which would lend some color to McEntee's position.

My argument is this: McEntee wants to make this the issue; politically and in a public relations sense, it is a very poor issue for the President as previous publicity has already shown.

My suggestion to the President was that, for the moment, he refuse McEntee's gambit; that he direct McNutt and Coy to tighten up their

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administrative control on McEntee, which they can legally do and that they start making a record of McEntee's refusal to take orders which will stand up in Congress. There are several good issues already on which McEntee is on the wrong side of the fence and in a month or so they can build up a good record for removing him.

As you know McEntee has a labor following and because of the Congressional "pork", a following in Congress. Also, if the Reorganization Act is extended or a Department of Welfare is created, McEntee can be legislated out of existence.

The troubles of CCC go far beyond Sharon Camp, although it is symptomatic. The only solution is McEntee's removal and the only safe way of accomplishing this is to move on a sound political plane. In the meanwhile Sharon Camp will suffer; but with McEntee at the controls it will be frustrated anyway.

I hope you agree with this, but if you do not I would like to discuss it with you.

James Rowe, Jr.

This is addressed to Eleanor Roosevelt . . .

FILE REFERENCE:

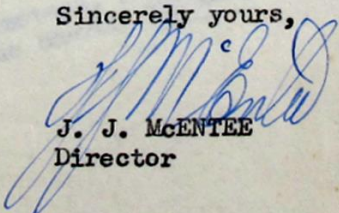
March 18, 1941

Mr. James H. Rowe, Jr.
Administrative Assistant
The White House Office
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. Rowe:

It gives me pleasure to send you a copy of my
Annual Report to the Administrator of the Federal
Security Agency, relating to the operation of the
Civilian Conservation Corps during the fiscal year
ended June 30, 1940.

Sincerely yours,


J. J. McENTEE
Director

Law School of Harvard University,
Cambridge, Mass.

OFFICE OF THE DEAN

November 12, 1940

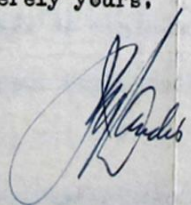
CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Jim:

You will shortly be getting our report on the C.C.C. business. It is a pretty good report but it doesn't say one thing that it can't say but which must be said somehow to the President and that is that there should be a change in the directorship of the C.C.C. Under its present leadership there is slight hope that any of the real accomplishments that we desire can be effected. As to who should take that place, I have no idea at the present time. If there is still going to be an insistence that a labor man should take that place, I doubt whether I can have any ideas of any consequence because my knowledge of the best persons would then be so limited as to be useless. If the President can see his way clear to appointing the best man regardless of labor affiliation to that post I might then have some ideas.

With my best regards,

Sincerely yours,



James Rowe, Esq.
Administrative Assistant to the President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

C.C.C.
Spec

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

1. McEntee out.
2. War Dept. out - reserve officers out.
3. Reorganize administration under CCC.
4. Merge NYA and CCC.
5. Personnel director.
6. Give War Dept. 2 noncombatant camps for each Corps Area.

Note: These points are the summary of the confidential committee report and American Youth Commission report. The President has not specifically agreed to go along with all of them, but he probably will.