Brooklyn College Experiment Cited as Possible Solution of Problem

To the New York Herald Tribune:

On the home front is there any topic which takes precedence in importance over the farm labor shortage? We know that farms are losing regiments of production labor to defense industries, to the Army and other Federal service. We are informed that thousands of farms are being sold because needed workers are unavailable. As to proposed remedies, we read of price ceilings, wage ceilings, freezing farm labor, drafting men for farm work, drafting women for the farms, deferment from military service of farm labor, increased mechanization of farms to replace labor, et al.

That many able men are making any effort to discover some formulae by which the criticism may be remedied we may hope. We must hope so because most of us there is little else we can do. For the sake of making some aspects of this farm labor more meaningful, however, some concrete facts are offered here, together with suggestions based on observations made during the last few months, and also on an interest in farm problems which is nearly forty-five years in duration.

On a farm in central Missouri two workers employed by the day, when weather permitted, received during the first part of this year $1.25 and $1.50, respectively, for eight-hour days. What would happen if a defense plant were to be opened in that neighborhood, in which pay at the rate of 85 cents an hour would be the return for any one who knew one end of a monkey wrench from

day, with their fellows, combined with actual days of farm work, seems certain; for them such work-camp experience would be the only avenue of introduction to any part of this enriching education.

It cannot be too strongly urged that college and school authorities will need to assume the responsibility for the development of work for city youth. Here the Land Corps expand its activities to states now involved for placements and supervision to be seen. But for the prospect of enrollment and orientation placement with suitable employers, for the continuous vision of the farm work and for the guidance and of the living centers in the agency can completely replace educational authorities nor substitute for them.

An analysis of the various aspects of the farm work-camp plan they revealed themselves in the Hook experiment is being by a faculty committee at College. A copy will be for any one interested to see.

RALPH C. BEN

Brooklyn, Nov. 2, 1942.