Student Crop Corps

City Colleges Plan Summer Work-Study Squads

Beyond and above the values of regular class work, we are hoping that there may be developed also community education programs in the form of weekly discussion periods, led by local leaders among the farmers, teachers, clergy, business men, doctors, county agricultural agents, etc. Such meetings could easily represent assemblies of several near-by labor squads, meeting in some local central school or church. What a contribution toward a better understanding between city and country could be achieved by such a "lyceum" program.

In the formulation of state-wide programs for the utilization of city youth in the summer farm harvest, it is suggested that the plan of enlisting students and teacher-leaders in class groups does not have to be limited to New York City college students. High-school curricula can easily provide similar teacher-pupil work class relations and community programs adjusted to high-school grades are entirely feasible. A broad state-wide program for New York which provided work camp experience for city boys and girls would be a most positive salvage product of what is at first sight largely a destructive dislocation of normal education. But whether a program is broad and comprehensive, involving many students, or focused on a single group installation of small size, real success for the primary purpose of food production and also for the correlated education derivatives will depend upon the recognition and observance of four factors:

1. Recruiting program. The prospective student workers must be enlisted and carefully selected for physical fitness and manual dexterity, for character and intelligence, and for patriotic motivation which will lead them to volunteer with full understanding that they will be committed to an extended period of strange surroundings and living conditions, hard and often tedious tasks and for pay rates which will not be high.

2. Teacher-leaders must also be carefully selected for their sympathetic understanding of young people, their capacity to teach outside of stereotyped surroundings and their willingness to serve for more than expenses.

3. The responsibility and opportunity must be recognized by the educational institution, both to help its students to take part in the important task of food production and to make sure that this work experience is as educationally rewarding as possible.

4. Rural communities and farm employers need to recognize and respond to the attitude and motives of the students and teachers, and to receive such groups not purely as so many "labor units," but as individuals who have enlisted for service on the food-production front, motivated by the spirit which the present emergency demands. These young people should have the assurance of steady work, with as much diversity as possible, to prevent monotony and to contribute toward their growth and experience. Housing and living conditions of reasonable comfort should be provided and the opportunity to obtain good food. There should be facilities for recreation available for the group and opportunity to participate in some of the community social affairs. In this connection it is our present belief that no work group should be large; twenty may be the best maximum, both for management as a class group and to avoid long hauls for work. The earning opportunities should be enough to provide good food, plus a moderate margin for savings.

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