

March 21, 1933

[Recommending Civilian Conservation Corps]

FDR Speech File

~~P.P.F.~~

3/21/33

To the Congress:

It is essential to our recovery program that measures immediately be enacted ~~which are directly~~ aimed at unemployment relief. A direct attack in this problem suggests three types of legislation.

The first is the ~~direct and immediate~~  
<sup>now</sup>  
enrolment of workers <sub>A</sub> by the Federal Government for such public employment as can be quickly started and will not interfere with the demand for or the proper standards of normal employment.

The second is grants to States for relief work.

The third extends to a broad public works labor creating program.

With reference to the latter I am now studying the many projects suggested and the financial questions involved. I shall make recommendations to the Congress presently.

In regard to grants to States for relief

work, I advise you that the remainder of the appropriation of last year will last until May. Therefore, and because a continuance of Federal aid is still a definite necessity for many States, a further appropriation must be made before the end of this special session.

I find a clear need for some simple Federal machinery to coordinate and check ~~the~~ these grants of aid. I am, therefore, asking that you establish the office of Federal Relief Administrator, whose duty it will be to scan requests for grants and to check the efficiency and wisdom of their use.

The first of these measures which I have enumerated, however, can and should be immediately enacted. I propose to create a civilian conservation corps to be used <sup>simple</sup> in work, not interfering with normal employment, and confining itself to forestry, the prevention of soil erosion, flood control and similar projects. I call your attention to the fact that this type of work is of definite, practical

value, not only through the prevention of great present financial loss, but also as a means of creating future national wealth. This is brought home by the news we are receiving today of vast damage caused by floods on the Ohio and other rivers.

Control and direction of such work can be carried on by existing machinery of the departments of Labor, Agriculture, War and Interior.

I estimate that 250,000 men can be given temporary employment by early summer if you give me authority to proceed within the next two weeks.

I ask no new funds at this time. The use of unobligated funds, now appropriated for public works, will be sufficient for several months. Before the close of the special session an additional appropriation will be necessary to carry the work on until the regular session.

This enterprise is an established part of our national policy. It will conserve our precious natural resources. It will pay dividends to the present and future generations. It will make improvements in national and state domains which have been largely forgotten in the past few years of industrial development.

More important, however, than the material gains will be the moral and spiritual value of such work. The overwhelming majority of unemployed Americans, who are now walking the streets and receiving private or public relief, would infinitely prefer to work. We can take a vast army of these unemployed out into healthful surroundings. We can eliminate to some extent at least the threat that enforced idleness brings to spiritual and moral stability. It is not a panacea for all the unemployment but it is an essential step in this emergency. I ask its adoption.

*The White Horse*  
*March 21, 1933.*

[March 21, 1933]

*immediately*  
It is essential to our recovery program that measures  
1 be enacted which are directly aimed at unemployment ~~and~~  
relief. A direct attack in this problem suggests three  
types of legislation.

The first is the direct and immediate <sup>employment</sup> ~~relief~~ of  
workers by the Federal government for such public employ-  
ment as <sup>can be quickly started and will not interfere with the</sup> ~~the prevention of soil erosion and~~  
<sup>demand for normal employment</sup> ~~the prevention of soil erosion and~~

The second is grants to states for relief work.

The third extends to a broad public <sup>creating</sup> ~~public~~ works labor  
~~program~~ program.

*Direct*  
*A.*  
With reference to the latter, careful consideration  
must be given to the many details of projects properly  
included under such a measure, also to the major financial  
questions thus raised. I am, however, at work on this  
subject and I shall make recommendations as soon as a  
practicable program has been completed.

Neither am I proposing at this moment the immediate  
appropriation of further funds for grants in aid. I am  
informed that the balance appropriated last year for this  
purpose will last until May. I shall ask for further  
appropriations before the end of this special session; but  
there is needed immediately a measure which will insure full  
economy and efficiency in the expenditure of these vast sums  
by the states. With the Federal government assuming such an  
extended financial obligation, it has the right and duty to  
provide for itself the machinery to direct its expenditures  
wisely. I am, therefore, asking that you establish the  
office of Federal Relief Administrator, whose duty it will  
be to scan requests for grants and to check the efficiency  
and wisdom of their use. By a wise exercise of the authority  
of such an administrator, relief work of all sorts throughout  
the United States may be effectively coordinated.

*This*

The first of the measures, however, enumerated above,

can and should be immediately enacted. I propose the creation of a Civilian Conservation Corps, to be used in work which will not in any way interfere with normal employment, confining itself to immediate efforts to forestry, the prevention of soil erosion and similar projects. The control and direction of such a work army can be provided by the existing machinery by the Departments of Labor, Agriculture, Interior and War. I estimate that two hundred fifty thousand can be given temporary employment by early summer, if we can start the machinery within the next two weeks. It is perfectly practical to use unobligated funds now appropriated for public works, thus imposing no additional burden on the Treasury at this time. The sort of enterprise suggested by this measure is an established part of our national policy. It is aimed at the conservation of the precious natural resources of our country. The results of such work will pay dividends to the future generations. It will make possible the carrying out of improvements in national and state domains which have been largely forgotten in the past few years of industrial development. It is a contribution to our essential national wealth.

More important, however, than the material gains will be the moral and spiritual value of such work. The many months of unemployment in which so many able bodied and healthy men and women, particularly the young, have been reduced to an enforced idleness, as everyone knows, in the very nature of things has threatened spiritual, moral and physical dangers too serious to be ignored. This project offers a direct relief alternative to this disintegrating process. It takes a vast army of the unemployed out into moral and physically healthful surroundings. What we expend for this purpose is practical insurance against the threat that unemployment offers to our national man power. It puts the reclamation of human moral in the forefront of our recovery program.

RECORDS OF THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

RECORD GROUP 233

MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT

OF MARCH 21, 1933

RELATING TO

UNEMPLOYMENT RELIEF

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES  
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE  
GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION  
WASHINGTON: 1955



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I find a clear need for some simple Federal machinery to coordinate and check these grants of aid. I am, therefore, asking that you establish the office of Federal Relief Administrator, whose duty it will be to scan requests for grants and to check the efficiency and wisdom of their use.

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Control and direction of such work can be carried on by existing machinery for the departments of Labor, Agriculture, War and Interior.

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FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

The White House,

March 21, 1933.