

The Sioux and the Indian-CCC

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The federal government initiated some significant legislation and relief programs for the Indians during the 1930s, designed primarily to reverse traditional policies of Indian-white relationships. Reaction to these efforts varied and thus caused officials to alter objectives from time to time to accommodate various tribes, including the Sioux. One well-known legislative measure, the Wheeler-Howard Act, paved the way for the enactment of depression relief measures, such as the Civilian Conservation Corps-Indian Division (CCC-ID), and reversed unfair restrictions placed upon the Indians by the Dawes Act of 1887.¹ The Dawes Act represented an attempt to assimilate the Indians into the white man's culture by distributing reservation lands in severalty. However, long before the 1920s, it became evident that this so-called assimilation program had failed. All the Indians still living on reservations remained miserably poor, while conditions for the South Dakota Sioux already had passed the critical point. Not only had they suffered from the loss of part of their land and much of their culture, but also from inadequate education and poor health. Moreover, their lives were regimented by a seemingly indifferent Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA).

In 1923, after several Indian organizations and magazine articles condemned the policies of the BIA, Secretary of the Interior Herbert Work instructed the Board of Indian Commis-

1. The official name for the agency was the Indian Emergency Conservation Work (IECW), but it was popularly referred to as the Civilian Conservation Corps-Indian Division (CCC-ID) and will be written as such in this article.

sioners to investigate the charges raised by the critics.² When the findings of the board turned out to be nothing more than a "white wash" of the BIA, the Brookings Institute for Government Research launched an extensive survey of economic and social conditions of all reservation Indians. The result of the survey, published as the Meriam Report, in effect, stated that the Dawes Act had meant poverty for the Indians, and that giving them allotments of land did not automatically make them farmers.³ They needed training in appropriate farming techniques. However, even if the South Dakota tribes had possessed the necessary knowledge and machinery for dry-farming, most of their reservation lands were totally unsuited for agriculture. On the Pine Ridge Reservation, the average Indian possessed no more tools than a hoe and rake and occasionally a walking plow to work the few acres of cultivable soil. Under such conditions, he had practically no alternative but to rent his land to a white rancher or farmer.⁴

The task of invoking radical new measures to solve the problems of the Indians fell to John Collier. Appointed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1933 to head the Indian Bureau, Collier hoped to correct past wrongs inflicted upon one of the nation's longest suppressed minorities with a single comprehensive law. The result was the Wheeler-Howard or Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) of 1934, which exemplified Collier's philosophy and that of the New Deal. It abandoned the allotment system that had dominated federal Indian policy since 1887 and provided a \$10 million "revolving fund" to assist Indian cooperations in economic development.⁵

The Indian Reorganization Act granted the tribes limited home rule by allowing them to adopt their own constitutions and bylaws. This action curbed federal power over them, but fell

2. *New York Times*, 26 May 1933, p. 2. President Grant established the Board of Indian Commissioners in 1869 to make yearly reports to the secretary of the Interior. Franklin Roosevelt abolished this ten-member advisory board in 1933.

3. Randolph C. Downes, "A Crusade for Indian Reform, 1922-1934," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 32 (Dec. 1945): 336-42; Michael T. Smith, "The Wheeler-Howard Act of 1934: The Indian New Deal," *Journal of the West* 10 (July 1971): 522; Richard N. Ellis, ed., *The Western American Indian* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1972), pp. 144-45; Herbert S. Schell, *History of South Dakota*, rev. ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1968), p. 337.

4. Schell, *South Dakota*, pp. 336-37; Smith, "The Wheeler-Howard Act of 1934," p. 522.

5. U.S., *Statutes at Large* 48, pt. 1 (June 1934-Dec. 1934), "An Act to Conserve and Develop Indian Lands and Resources," 18 June 1934, ch. 576, pp. 984, 986.

short of granting an autonomous form of government since it carried with it the stipulation that all constitutions must be approved by the secretary of the Interior. Ramon Roubideaux, a Brule Sioux and an attorney in South Dakota, viewed the extension of home rule to the Indians as a hoax because "self-government by permission is no self-government at all."⁶ Indeed, the paternalistic attitude of the Indian Bureau had long since submerged much of the Indians' initiative and ambition.

Commissioner Collier also hoped to reform the entire program of Indian education, but the Wheeler-Howard Act only established a scholarship fund for higher learning. Additional legislation became necessary before he could carry out the desired changes and eliminate Indian boarding schools, develop day-schools near the reservations, and encourage Indian children to attend public schools. The Johnson-O'Malley Act of 1934 authorized the secretary of the Interior to enter into contracts with states for the improvement of Indian education and welfare. The federal government in turn made payments to school districts where Indian children lived on reservations and attended public day-schools. Because Indian lands held in trust were nontaxable for educational purposes, the schools thereby used the funds in lieu of tax revenue. At the same time the federal government could help establish curriculum standards.⁷ The act was hailed by most authorities as a step forward, while others saw it as the same old acculturation process of President Grant's Peace Policy.

Catholic missionaries in South Dakota especially reacted negatively to Collier's support of day-schools in place of boarding schools. Much of the controversy involved a treaty between the United States and the Sioux Indians whereby Catholic educational institutions had acquired 80 percent of the total government grant for religious education. When the treaty lapsed, the government planned to withdraw support from the Catholic Indian mission schools—except for physical maintenance. The savings would be used for the care of Indian children attending other parochial schools in all parts of the country. Catholic mis-

6. Roubideaux as quoted in Joseph H. Cash and Herbert T. Hoover, eds., *To Be An Indian: An Oral History* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1971), p. 132.

7. Ella C. Lebow, "Transition of Indian Education from Federal to State Schools on the Rosebud Indian Reservation, Rosebud, South Dakota, 1942-1955," (Master's thesis, University of South Dakota, 1958), p. 37; Evelyn C. Adams, *American Indian Education* (Morningside Heights, N.Y.: Kings Crown Press, 1946), p. 78; *Statutes at Large* 48, pt. 1, 596 (16 Apr. 1934).

sionaries vehemently attacked Collier's program on the grounds that it would endanger the status of mission schools. However, the real reason for the attacks was fear of increased aid to Protestant establishments.⁸

Missionaries also became extremely antagonistic over the "radical new commissioner's" insistence that interference with the Indians' religious life or ceremonial expression would not be tolerated. Segregating the Indians from white society and encouraging old tribal traditions would undermine all missionary efforts to Christianize them. The missionaries had reason to be concerned over the Sioux returning to their native religions. The so-called pagan cults of the Ghost Dance and the Sun Dance directly conflicted with Christian teachings, as did the more popular Peyote cult or Native American Church.⁹ Once relieved of government restrictions, these ceremonies would again be practiced actively on the reservations.

Even with the revived interest in native culture, education, and government, the basic fact remained that many Indians were starving because they lacked the means to support themselves. The "checkerboard" pattern of allotted land resulting from division by inheritance and leasing to whites deterred any attempt at proper land use. The Meriam Report had revealed that the average yearly per capita income of those residents of South Dakota reservations in 1926 was only \$166.¹⁰ This had not changed by the early 1930s, but in fact, the ravages of drought and depression had further complicated the situation. Therefore, when direct relief from federal and state agencies proved insuffi-

8. *Catholic Sioux Herald* (Marty, S.Dak.), 15 July 1933, p. 7; Kenneth Roy Philp, "John Collier and the American Indian, 1920-1945," (Ph.D. diss., Michigan State University, 1968), pp. 149-50. See also Jeffrey L. Viken, "Quick Bear v. Leupp: Amalgamation of Church and State on the Rosebud," *South Dakota Historical Collections* 38 (1976): 4-72, for an in-depth legal study of the use of federal and tribal funds for the support of sectarian schools.

9. James L. Satterlee and Vernon D. Malan, *History and Acculturation of the Dakota Indians*, Rural Sociology Department, Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin no. 126 (Brookings: South Dakota State University, 1970), pp. 62-63; G.E.E. Lindquist, "The Government's New Indian Policy," *The Missionary Review of the World* 57 (Apr. 1934), pp. 182-84; "The Indian Problem Today," *Ibid.* (June 1934): 261-62; Flora Warren Seymour, "Federal Favor for Fetishism," *Ibid.* 58 (Sept. 1935): 397-400; Elaine Goodale Eastman, "Does Uncle Sam Foster Paganism?" *Christian Century* 51 (8 Aug. 1934): 1016; Cash and Hoover, *To Be An Indian*, p. 158.

10. Oliver La Farge, ed., *The Changing Indian* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1942), p. 74; Lewis Meriam et al., *The Problem of Indian Administration* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1928), pp. 449-50.

cient, special work-relief projects were started and continued until the outbreak of World War II.

To remedy worsening conditions, Congress created the Civilian Conservation Corps in March 1933 to relieve "the acute conditions of widespread distress and unemployment . . . and to provide for the restoration of the country's depleted natural resources."¹¹ It divided the corps among several bureaus in the departments of War, Agriculture, Labor, and Interior—with Robert Fechner as the overall director. The act did not mention the Indians, but Collier and J. P. Kinney, director of Forestry, quickly made known to President Roosevelt the urgent need for conservation measures on the reservations. They insisted that special conditions warranted an independent program under the direction of the Office of Indian Affairs.¹² After careful consideration, Roosevelt authorized the Indian Emergency Conservation Work (IECW), which allowed reservation Indians to direct their own work in separate camps. Not only would Indians do all the labor, but tribal councils would help select the projects. To assist in technical matters the bureau established six district offices in the Dakotas, Wyoming, Montana, and Nebraska under the jurisdiction of the Billings, Montana, district. Although given virtually independent action on the reservations, the Indian program had to meet most of the regular CCC regulations and when disagreements arose, the white CCC rules prevailed.¹³

Roosevelt placed the new program on a separate basis primarily because of objections by the Indians to quasi-military camps on their lands.¹⁴ Thus, corps officials exempted workers in the reservation camps from the customary army conditioning period and at the same time gave preference to Indians for supervisory posi-

11. U.S., *Statutes at Large* 48, pt. 1 (Jan. 1933-June 1933), "Relief of Unemployment Through the Performance of Useful Public Work," 31 Mar. 1933, ch. 17, pp. 22-23.

12. "Final Report of E.C.W. and C.C.C. Indian Division," p. 2, File 32114-44, General Service, 344, Civilian Conservation Corps-Indian Division, Record Group 75, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited as "Final Report"); J. P. Kinney, *Indian Forest and Range: A History of the Administration and Conservation of the Redman's Heritage* (Washington, D.C.: Forestry Enterprises, 1950), pp. 275-76.

13. *New York Times*, 1 May 1933, p. 9, 27 Aug. 1933, p. 12; "Standing Rock Council Active in CCC-ID," *Indians At Work* (Oct. 1940): 34; Donald Lee Parman, "The Indian CCC," (Ph.D. diss., University of Oklahoma, 1967), pp. 32-33.

14. U.S., Department of Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior, 1933* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1933), p. 69.

tions and a meager subsistence allowance for providing clothing and shelter. Because most of the supervisory jobs required technical skills or knowledge that the majority of the Sioux did not possess, whites filled these administrative positions. Later, a few Indians completed leadership training courses sponsored by the CCC-ID and advanced to project managers.

The regular CCC practice of employing 200 men in a camp for six months proved impractical on the sparsely settled reservations where there was little need for such a large labor force for an extended period of time. Roosevelt authorized the Indians to be mobilized into work units of 40 to 50 men. Corps officials then established three principle types of domiciles: the permanent boarding camp for single men; the home camp for those desiring to live at home; and the family camp for projects of short duration where the entire household could reside temporarily in tents.¹⁵ The family camps were popular with the Sioux and at the same time cost the federal government less than permanent units.

However, sanitation conditions in the twenty family units on the Rosebud Reservation in 1937 were deplorable. There were no sewer or water systems and open garbage pits were commonplace. Two agency doctors and four field nurses served the area, but were unavailable to perform services for the CCC-ID camps. To combat these adverse conditions, workers resided in camps for one season only and whenever possible they took advantage of living at home. At times this became extremely difficult. For example, at Pine Ridge a work crew even had to carry a two-week food supply with them because of the rough terrain and roads.¹⁶

Regardless of the conditions and type of work camps, the CCC-ID had more applicants than it could possibly accommodate. To allow the maximum number of Indians on the payroll, officials would stagger employment of CCC-ID enrollees and allowed them to work on neighboring reservations. In both situations a committee appointed by the tribal council selected the enrollees

15. Ibid., pp. 69-70; Arthur Lawrence Bach, "Administration of Indian Resources in the U.S., 1933-1941," (Ph.D. diss., State University of Iowa, 1942), pp. 169-70; "C.C.C. Activities for Indians," *Monthly Labor Review* 40 (July 1939): 94-95; *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1934*, p. 70.

16. O. H. Schmocker, Supervisor, CCC-ID, to C. R. Whitlock, Superintendent Rosebud, 4 Dec. 1940, File 54193-38, Enrollee Program, 346, CCC-ID, R.G. 75, N.A.; "Narrative Reports," File 11854-33, Pine Ridge, 344, CCC-ID, R.G. 75, N.A.; U.S., Department of Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Indians At Work* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 15 Nov. 1934), p. 46.



"Typical" CCC-ID temporary family camps at Pine Ridge, above, and Crow Creek, below. Sanitation conditions in the camps were deplorable, and workers resided in these tents for one season only.



from among the men over eighteen years of age who were free from communicable diseases and able to perform ordinary labor. The basic wage was \$30.00 a month, or \$1.50 per day—plus 60¢ subsidy for those living at home—for twenty workdays a month. Enrollees also received from \$1.00 to \$2.00 per day for use of their own teams of horses. Some eventually advanced to assistant foreman at \$135.00 per month and a few to group foreman at \$167.00. Administration officials held back a portion of each enrollee's paycheck until the winter months when little or no work was available.¹⁷

The CCC-ID was the first emergency legislation from which the Sioux benefited directly. Heretofore, CCC-ID funds could only be used for the necessities of life, but large-scale projects could now be undertaken to protect forest, range, and farm lands. Work began on several reservations by the summer of 1933, following the approval of the district office at Billings. Considerable confusion surrounded the first camp at Pine Ridge where seventy-six men lived in the rodeo building for several weeks with little to do except general clean-up work in the absence of construction tools, transportation, and equipment.¹⁸

The geography of South Dakota required special consideration for administrative officials. The Pine Ridge, Rosebud, Standing Rock, Cheyenne River, and Lower Brule reservations are located west of the ninety-eight meridian in the Great Plains region. Grama and buffalo grasses and insufficient rainfall made the area unsuitable for large-scale agriculture. These conditions, accompanied by severe drought, forced the CCC-ID to concentrate on water development and irrigation projects to control erosion and overgrazing. The Standing Rock Reservation, between North and South Dakota, and the Cheyenne River Reservation had sufficient timber for various forestation projects. Trees were too scarce on the other reservations to be of much value.¹⁹

The Crow Creek, Yankton, and Sisseton Sioux reservations are located east of the Missouri River, where the soil is richer and the yearly rainfall exceeds twenty inches. Here the enrollees carried

17. R. Mitchell, Superintendent of IECW, to John Collier, 16 Mar. 1934, File 16854-33, Pine Ridge, Vol. 1, 344, CCC-ID, R.G. 75, N.A.; Charles Price Harper, *The Administration of the Civilian Conservation Corps* (Clarksburg, W. Va.: Clarksburg Publishing Company, 1939), pp. 72-73.

18. R. Mitchell to John Collier, 16 Mar. 1934, File 16854-33, Pine Ridge, Vol. 1, 344, CCC-ID, R.G. 75, N.A.

19. Walter Prescott Webb, *The Great Plains* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1931), p. 31; R. Mitchell to John Collier, 16 Mar. 1934, File 16854-33, Pine Ridge, Vol. 1, 344, CCC-ID, R.G. 75, N.A.

out useful projects such as the construction of fences, roads, and telephone lines. At Sisseton and Yankton the Indians also revitalized several old springs and constructed a dam to impound water for a small irrigation project.²⁰ Regardless of the location, the CCC-ID's primary aim always was to increase the value of Indian resources even as the number of projects declined on the various reservations.

Inexperience and poor planning plagued the CCC-ID during its early years. Engineers in charge of projects were forced to use appropriated funds before expiration dates, since surplus money had to be redistributed to other districts. At first, few Indians knew how to operate the crude equipment necessary for road and dam construction and as a consequence hundreds of small earth dams had to be rebuilt. By 1936 the Indians generally had gained sufficient confidence and experience to undertake more elaborate projects. Heavier and more sophisticated machinery replaced horse-drawn scrapers, and concrete spillways became a regular addition to the larger dams constructed on the Red Earth and Cheyenne rivers.²¹

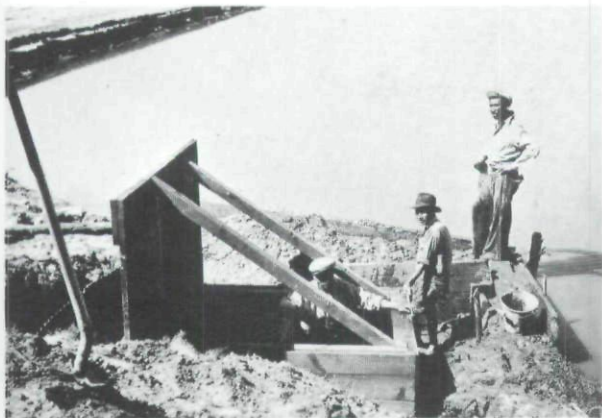
Such structures marked a change in the original purpose of the CCC-ID in that the maximum amount of money should go into payrolls, not expensive equipment.²² Building these larger projects necessitated the use of heavy equipment and skilled workers. Again, many of the Sioux were inexperienced in operating earth movers, dump trucks, cranes, and large cement mixers, so non-Indians filled some of the positions. With the stress on speed and efficiency, supervisors allotted little time for training new enrollees. The dependency on machinery increased the amount of work accomplished, but had an unfavorable effect on Indian employment.

Several factors combined to cause the emphasis on the increased size of projects. Engineers in the district office could easily and accurately analyze the production cost of dam building. The immense area of the Billings district required concentration on projects that could be supervised and planned from a central office. Moreover, in 1936 when the CCC-ID began working with the Irrigation Division in developing irrigation facilities for sub-

20. *Catholic Sioux Herald*, 15 Nov. 1934, p. 4; Meyer, *History of the Santee Sioux*, pp. 329-30.

21. Parman, "The Indian CCC," pp. 104-5; Harvey W. Morris, "Emergency Conservation Work at Cheyenne River Reservation, South Dakota," *Indians At Work* (1 Aug. 1936), p. 32.

22. *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1933*, p. 71.



Workers construct a wooden spillway gate so that the water in the reservoir, in the background, can be used for irrigation at Standing Rock.

Right, dam construction crew at Pine Ridge; below, the use of heavy equipment was necessary in road construction on Cheyenne River.



sistence gardens, the Billings office immediately drew up plans for several large reservoirs on the South Dakota reservations.²³

Tom C. White, district coordinator, revitalized the character of the Billings district by constantly requesting new and expanded production roles. After Washington accepted most of his proposals, White would then seek permission to hire skilled whites to operate the machinery rather than train Indians for such duties. His policy was to keep enrollees in unskilled labor, so that the equipment would not be damaged or production delayed. This thoughtlessness for the welfare of the enrollees carried over into the education program, which lagged far behind other areas in off-duty activities. Any encouragement in vocational and educational training of CCC-ID enrollees came from reservation officials, not the Billings headquarters.²⁴

Under White's insistence several small irrigated gardens, from two to fifteen acres each, were constructed on every South Dakota reservation by the end of 1936. The Irrigation Division assisted in the site selection, designed the irrigation system, and furnished the pumping equipment while Interior Department officials selected the location on the basis of land ownership, soil quality, the number of families within a certain radius, and the quantity of water supply. No serious problems were encountered except an occasional legal question over water rights. The CCC-ID, with its existing organization for construction work, performed earth-moving operations and supervised the building. Responsibility for the gardens—usually small pumping projects along the Missouri River—fell to the reservation superintendents. The Sioux normally operated the gardens on a family basis except in a few instances where they participated in community enterprises with the produce being shared equally by everybody. All gardens yielded more than enough vegetables for personal consumption, thus allowing a surplus for marketing on the reservations.²⁵

In addition to furnishing water for irrigation, the small storage dams provided a dependable water supply for both domestic and stock use, as well as improving the health and sanitation conditions for many reservation residents. Even though the sub-

23. Tom White, Productions Coordinating Officer, to John Collier, "Progress Report," 12 July 1937, File 57439-36, Subsistence Gardens, R.G. 75, N.A.; Parman, "The Indian CCC," p. 106.

24. Parman, "The Indian CCC," pp. 106-8.

25. Tom White to John Collier, "Progress Report," 12 July 1937, File 57439-36, Subsistence Gardens, R.G. 75, N.A.

sistence gardens were financially successful and contributed to the economic rehabilitation of the Sioux, the plan did not meet White's expectations because, in complying with CCC-ID regulations, too much work had to be performed by hand labor!²⁶

The CCC-ID also cooperated directly with the Relief and Rehabilitation Program to provide facilities and opportunities for destitute Indians. Together these agencies strove to expand the economy of the Sioux people by developing truck-garden farms for food production and livestock industries for cash needs. The federal government selected the participants for the enterprises, with landless Indians receiving preferences, who would then come under direct supervision of the reservation superintendent.²⁷

The Enrollee Program provided for the Indians' training, recreation, and welfare and was an integral part of the CCC-ID. Its major objective was to make the red man more employable while presenting useful information applicable to everyday living. Because many of the enrollees could not read or write English, the program experienced more difficulty operating among the Sioux than with any other group in the country. The nature of the CCC-ID camps, coupled with the high turnover in employees, made it difficult to devise practicable training classes. Moreover, attitudes of area officials, like G. B. Arthur, the supervisor of project training at Pine Ridge, set the tone for the program's importance. "Work is the basis of CCC and is the all-important thing. I am never going to allow anybody to take time out of our working day for training."²⁸ Given these problems and the fact that most enrollees who lived at home did not devote their off-duty time to education, on-the-job training became the principle method of instruction on the South Dakota reservations.

Despite White's insistence that production activities must dominate the CCC-ID camps, educational programs did much to boost the welfare and morale of the Indians. Corps officials provided a realistic concept of education that corresponded to the interests and needs of the enrollees and the reservations. The scope of the training was wider than the local conservation program itself. Many project leaders, truck drivers, and machine

26. *Ibid.*

27. "Project Reports," File 76071-P-1a, Rehabilitation and Relief, R.G. 75, N.A.

28. G. B. Arthur, Supervisor of Project Training Pine Ridge, as quoted in W. O. Roberts, Superintendent Pine Ridge, to Tom White, 11 July 1940, File 59039, General Services, 344, CCC-ID, R.G. 75, N.A.



Although education was not a primary goal of the CCC-ID, enrollees on the Standing Rock Reservation participated in a first aid class and a fire prevention class in 1937.



operators held first aid certificates and officials in the Extension Department sponsored educational discussion groups and weekend leadership workshops with supervisors, farm extension agents, physicians, and various government employees serving as classroom instructors. The Sioux received training in farm maintenance, carpentry, tractor operation and repair, Red Cross safety, and a variety of other fields. General adult education lagged behind more practical forms of instruction, but by the end

of the 1930s officials at Pine Ridge and Cheyenne River had used CCC-ID funds to equip a truck with a traveling library.²⁹

To assist the enrollees in their educational and recreational endeavors, camp administrators immediately purchased a movie projector. Educational movies on health, safety, gardening, rodent control as well as films on CCC-ID activities were shown on a weekly basis. Entertaining movies, a novel experience for the Sioux, were viewed with mixed reactions. While watching a film about Yellowstone National Park, a number of people in the audience did not believe there were such things as geysers. Only after careful explanation and a reshowing of the film did the Cheyenne River officers convince the Indians that there were natural hot springs that intermittently ejected a column of water and steam.³⁰

With the welfare of the enrollees as one of the main objectives of camp administrators, leisure time received considerable attention. The Indians enjoyed a variety of athletic games—from baseball to "ice snakes"—but native songs and dances like the "Omaha," the "Grass," and the "Rabbit" were most popular.³¹ The relaxed nature of the camps allowed the Sioux considerable flexibility and freedom. A typical day in an Indian CCC camp began with the 6:00 a.m. reveille and ended with "lights out" at 9:30 p.m. Curfew violators received no disciplinary action if they were ready for work the following morning. Enrollees spent weekends with families or friends, depending upon the distance from camps and the availability of transportation. Some camps on the South Dakota reservations provided busses on weekends. In general, life in the Indian CCC camps was informally regulated.³²

In 1937 Congress refused to make the CCC a permanent agency, but did extend it for three more years. This supplementary legislation indirectly affected the Indian program by granting ten

29. Robert M. Patterson, Supervisor IECW Education, to all districts, 4 June 1936, File 58839, General Services, 344, CCC-ID, R.G. 75, N.A.; Parman, "The Indian CCC," p. 171; "Progress Report," no file number, Enrollee Program, Box 108, Pine Ridge, 346, CCC-ID, R.G. 75, N.A.

30. "Progress Report," no file number, Enrollee Program, Box 118, Cheyenne River, CCC-ID, R.G. 75, N.A.

31. Martha Jane Buchner, "Shinny and 'Snakes' on Rosebud," *Indians At Work* (1 Aug. 1936): 30-31. Ice Snakes, played at community gatherings, is one of the oldest contest games known to the Sioux. The Snakes, made of carefully selected beef rib bones and balanced with feather tails, were thrown on either ice or smooth ground. The art of the game laid in making the Snakes and in throwing them long distances.

32. Louis C. Schroeder, "Indian Conservation Camps," *Recreation* 28 (Aug. 1934): 249-52.

hours a week for general and vocational training. Reaction from the production minded Billings district took the form of a series of feeble excuses explaining why more education would be impractical on the huge Sioux reservations, so their program remained relatively unchanged. One official at Pine Ridge complained that the CCC-ID employed too many men over forty who were uninterested in education, therefore, no time would be allowed for training during the working day.³³ Even with the reluctance of Billings officials to encourage enrollee instruction, the Sioux realized some positive benefits. Training activities brought a fuller understanding of the bureau's intentions and helped remove some of the Indians' suspicions. Far more important was the fact that the more ambitious and talented Indians took advantage of the opportunity to improve themselves.

Roosevelt's determination to economize in the late 1930s cut sharply into the CCC-ID appropriations. In compliance to the president's directive, Fechner, director of the corps, notified his organization that it must employ one enrollee for every \$930 received in CCC-ID funds.³⁴ This forced the Billings district, which usually hired one man for every \$1500 received, to spend less money for supervisors and expensive machinery necessary for the elaborate projects. In order to execute the new policy Billings officials abandoned projects that could not be completed with hand labor and negotiated cooperative agreements with other bureau agencies.

With World War II approaching the CCC-ID became increasingly involved in war production activities. Government officials used the corps' existing facilities to teach various national defense courses, while opportunities opened up for enrollees in the private sector of the economy. Indians obtained employment as carpenters, truck drivers, mechanics, and welders—an impossibility during the depression years. After Congress completely cut the 1942 CCC-ID budget, it was only a matter of time before field officers halted production and laid off the enrollees and supervisory personnel.³⁵

33. U.S., *Statutes at Large* 50, pt. 1 (Jan. 1937-June 1937), "To Establish a Civilian Conservation Corps," 28 June 1937, ch. 383, pp. 319-22; John A. Salmond, *The Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933-42: A New Deal Case Study* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1967), p. 26; W. O. Roberts to Tom White, 11 July 1940, File 59039, General Services, 344, CCC-ID, R.G. 75, N.A.

34. W. O. Roberts to Tom White, 11 July 1940, File 59039, General Services, 344, CCC-ID, R.G. 75, N.A.; Parman, "The Indian CCC," p. 216.

35. "Final Report," p. 1.

In the midst of the activities to support the war effort, the Indian CCC came under harsh criticism from the Rosebud Tribal Council who charged that the uncertainty of the work benefited few Indians and that the dams served only the large cattlemen who leased the land. These attacks were largely unfounded because the CCC-ID provided the Indians with a substantial portion of their income during the depression and without the dams nobody would rent the grazing land. Probably the most legitimate complaints were against the supervisory personnel's excessive spending for machinery to construct large "show projects" that required skilled non-Indian labor. Likewise, officials used funds for cars and home improvements while most Indians lived in tents. Granted some of the criticisms were valid, but the overall accomplishments of the Indian CCC made most of them unjustified.³⁶

The council's proposal to redraft the CCC-ID came too late, for the program ended on 10 July 1942. In closing its operation the Billings office encountered many frustrations. Much of the equipment, which was to be transferred to the War and Navy departments or the Civil Aeronautics Administration, was scattered throughout the reservations and could not be accounted for. If these agencies rejected the property, it remained in the custody of the Indian Service. This all involved a tremendous amount of paperwork and when finally completed, Pine Ridge alone transferred over \$75,000 worth of equipment to the Army and Navy departments and retained \$53,709 for itself.³⁷

The CCC-ID left the Sioux after nine years of conservation and rehabilitation. Although there were diverse opinions over the effectiveness of the corps, it undoubtedly was one of the most popular and productive Indian programs of the decade. In South Dakota the CCC-ID employed 8,405 Indians and spent over \$4,500,000 on the Rosebud, Standing Rock, and Pine Ridge reservations alone. At Standing Rock in 1940, 97 percent of the population was still dependent on some form of relief and nearly one half of the money received came from the CCC-ID.³⁸

Certainly, the Indian CCC was neither designed as an end in itself, nor did it propose to solve all the enrollees' problems. The

36. Rosebud Tribal Council to Robert Fechner, 16 Apr. 1941, File 50871-36, Rosebud, 220, CCC-ID, R.G. 75, N.A.

37. "Final Report," p. 76.

38. Ibid., pp. 23-24; "Rehabilitation Reports," no file number, Box 122, Standing Rock, R.G. 75, N.A.; "CCC-ID Work Program, Statistical Data," 10 Apr. 1941, File 50871-36, Rosebud, 220, CCC-ID, R.G. 75, N.A.

wages were insufficient for those desiring a working capital to become self-supporting, and most reservations lacked the necessary land base to support the population. Their lands were suited solely for grazing, but even that became extremely difficult because of fragmentation by allotments. Some Indians who planted gardens began using their CCC-ID earnings to purchase vegetables and thus neglected their crops. In such situations the program was virtually ineffective.

Despite some shortcomings the CCC-ID kept many poverty-stricken Indians from starving and supplied hundreds of enrollees with skills and proper work habits necessary for off-reservation jobs. That the corps gave the Sioux confidence and a new outlook on life became evident by the great exodus of Indian men from the reservation to military service and private industries. Moreover, it helped reverse the downward drift of the Sioux and gave them something to cling to during the desperate years of the 1930s.

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