

I am Dr. Spencer M. Smith, Jr., secretary of the Citizens Committee on Natural Resources, which is a national conservation organization with offices in Washington, D.C.

We are very pleased to have on our board of directors some of the country's outstanding conservationists, and the chairman of our organization is Dr. Ira N. Gabrielson, a very well known conservationist.

I should preface my comments, Mr. Chairman, by stating that the conservation groups have long been interested in the young conservation corps concept. In fact, I think that was the name of the first bill that was introduced by the distinguished chairman of this committee, Congressman Perkins, Congressman Blatnik, and then Senator now Vice President Humphrey. Our interest continued when it became title I of the Youth Employment Act, and later when the Job Corps was created.

I do want to say one thing at the very outset. Certain comments, partly by implication, both in the press and by word of mouth have charged conservation organizations with supporting Job Corps conservation centers because of the need for cheap or slave labor. I not only reject this charge out of hand, but I think it is unfortunate that such an observation or commentary should be made by anyone.

Of course we have an interest in natural resources, both on Federal, private, State, and local. Anyone who has been involved in the policy determination of this legislation would realize that the principal reason for our support has been the young people who would benefit from conservation work. Whatever would result in the way of aiding and abetting our natural resource base would be a byproduct, rather than a primary emphasis.

I can say, Mr. Chairman, that I have never, in all the years that I have been connected with many conservation programs seen such an attack mounted against a particular program, as has been mounted on the Job Corps conservation center.

We have been involved in many controversies, such as the location of dams and the establishment of parks but none have been the equal of this.

People say, "How come? How can you explain the community hostility to a proposed conservation center?" It is very simple. Before the act was ever implemented, before there was ever a decision to establish a particular conservation center the press and the general commentary was so hostile that the people were in a state of panic at the mere thought that some of these centers might be located near their community. This situation occurred again and again. Two centers that I visited recently, Arrowood Camp in North Carolina and the Schenck Job Corps Center, both faced community opposition at the outset. Now both are supported strongly by the community.

The same situation occurred in Montana, and I can cite many more instances. One newspaper editor said, "I must confess, our minds were made up about this program, before there was ever a dollar spent or a boy enrolled."

About a year ago, I read a newspaper story regarding the same issue that was discussed this morning. The newspaper story said 40 percent of the Jobs Corps members at Camp Catoctin in Maryland came directly from school, and 32 percent of them came directly from jobs.