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"WE GOTTA DO IT."

Washington is rich in invigorating personalities these days, men with none of the ear marks of the politician or the diplomat, men who have been brought in simply because there was a new kind of job to be done, and it was believed that they had the experience which fitted them to handle it. One of the most electrifying of these newcomers is Harry L. Hopkins, head of the Federal Relief Administration.

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If four years ago anybody had suggested that the day was coming when the American Congress would vote a half billion dollars to feed people and a young man with no experience in public affairs, no political standing would be set at the work of spending it he would have been regarded as a suspicious radical. Since the beginning of this country, the feeding of the hungry, the relieving of those in distress has been regarded as a local matter. The township, the county, looked after the poor; that was one of the things we did for ourselves.

Even a year ago when it became obvious that the burden of caring for the hungry was becoming too heavy for many communities in the country the idea of Federal relief was fought. It was un-American. There were those who suspected it to be contrary to the Constitution, it seemingly being the idea that anything that has not been the custom of the country must be forbidden by the Constitution. But that sturdy old document covers a greater variety of possible activities than some of its most ardent admirers ever guessed. It starts out by declaring that one of its aims is to "promote the welfare of the people." Now if in the name of the welfare of the people natural resources of incalculable value can be turned over to private ownership, if rights of way across the continent with blocks of land thrown in as a bonus can be granted, if prohibitory tariffs which serve <sup>chiefly</sup> ~~only~~ a special group can be made the law of the land, why often it would seem that when a day came such as we now have, when millions of people are suffering from the bad management of the above privileged groups - it would seem to ~~take money to feed them~~ was anything but unconstitutional, that it was clearly "to promote the welfare of the people."

At all events Congress finally so concluded. In May it voted \$500,000,000. and President Roosevelt knowing his man called Harry Hopkins to Washington to spend the money. He hails from Iowa, this young man, and ever since he left his Iowa college, twenty years ago, he has been giving his time to the work of making life better worth living for multitudes of those caught by poverty, by illness, hopelessly involved. He knows the poor in the great cities; he knows the ravages of tuberculosis; he has served the Red Cross. That is, he knows the job which the administrator of the FRA must handle. He knows the job and he sees its relation to the act of National Recovery. "Relief is no longer playing a lone hand," he will tell you, "it is one of the great forces of the government marching with other forces to effect the recovery of our people."

This seeing the job as a factor in the tremendous program of recovery which Washington has inaugurated has given a force, a determination, to Harry

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Hopkins which many of his friends did not realize was in him. "He is another man," a social worker who had seen much of him in New York activities, told me. Certainly nobody could face a great task with a more resolute spirit. "We gotta do it," he will tell you, such small matters as enunciation forgotten as he faces his difficulties. "We gotta do it." I have heard no better slogan for this moment or one more in harmony with the general spirit of those who are pushing ahead the National Recovery program.

And just what is the work of FRA and just what is its relation to the undertaking to which the country as a whole is looking at the moment to restore our vanished prosperity - the work of NRA? There is no manner of doubt that the NRA has not only revived confidence, but it has actually, in the short time since it was inaugurated, put people to work, millions of people. No magic formula; it is a great experiment in co-operation and patience. Hurry it and you destroy it. It has begun to cut down that unemployment which is the measuring rod for depression. But even if it functions with twice the rapidity which we can reasonably expect there still will be a ghastly mass of the unemployed to be looked after this coming winter. Consider the figures. It is very necessary to study figures these days. In no other way can we

measure recovery, can we know just what we as individuals are called upon to do. What are the facts?

Our working world is made up of forty eight million, eight hundred and twenty nine thousand, nine hundred and twenty men, women and children over ten years of age. The children in this big figure number one million, two hundred fifty four, nine hundred thirty <sup>five</sup> four. According to the latest reports what is happening in this army? When Mr. Roosevelt took office last March twelve million and a half of them were unemployed, leaving over thirty six million with jobs - but what jobs. Not only had the working time been cut to three - two - and frequently one day, but there had been repeated pay cuts as well. At the beginning of this year, 1933, the population at work was receiving but forty three and a half percent of the wage they received before 1929.

What a heartening change has come over these figures since March! The best authorities believe that those out of work have been cut to between seven and eight million, and all the signs, see them as skeptically as you will, promise that this increase will go on, not rapidly but surely. We are taking up the slack in employment. As months go on we will continue to take it up.

Now it is the habit of man when he has had for a long time to carry heavy burdens to seize on a lightening of the load as an excuse for dropping it entirely. Everybody that had been actively concerned in making work and finding relief for our twelve and a half million unemployed has become more or less fed up with the whole dreadful business. We don't want to hear anything more about it, but the fact of the matter is "we gotta" hear about it. In this month of September in spite of all that has been taken up there are still fifteen million people, six million of them children, that must be fed and sheltered and should be kept in health, made to feel that life is not altogether hopeless and may again be worth living.

It is for these fifteen million that Harry Hopkins is working under government orders. He has a lot of money - five hundred million dollars - money which, according to the government's understanding in voting it, was to be met by the communities and states of the country which had resources to draw on. If the Federal Government gave so much, the town and the state should match it if possible. If that fine plan could be fully carried out there would be in charge of the public relief agencies of this country, federal and local, a billion dollars. But that plan has not and cannot be carried

out. There are spots on the map that are utterly bankrupt. There are states in such plights that they cannot match the government's money. But there are other serious hinderances.

When last year Congress was holding hearings on this revolutionary step of going in to private relief there were experienced and able people that warned against it. Let the Federal Government begin and you will have plenty of solvent localities and states saying, "We have stood up for three years, now let Washington take care of it." As a matter of fact there is no doubt at all that the usual local relief has been cut down by people laying down on the job - tired out - sick of it.

There was another warning. You will have politicians spending it - this great sum. The politician's argument being that if he votes the money he should at least select the people that spend it. Mr. Hopkins does not agree. "You cannot fool with this relief business on a political basis," he declares. "The politicians are anxious to turn the administration of this money over to people who know nothing about it whatever," exclaims Mr. Hopkins. "Why, even a bootlegger has somebody who knows his business, to cut his liquor."

So he is mustering to help him in this great task of administrating relief people trained to do the business. He is calling upon the trained social workers of the country, men and women like himself familiar from study and practice, with the administration of relief, men and women who take their problem with a large and sympathetic understanding of human beings and of the conditions which have brought them where they are, who treat them as individuals knowing well enough that in this great mass of unemployed there is practically no two cases alike, no two that can be handled in quite the same way.

But nobody knows better than Mr. Hopkins and those who have been handling the problems of public relief how far short all their efforts fall of anything like a sufficient satisfaction of human needs. If you are trying to convince yourself that this year the private agencies you have always supported can be dropped, that the government will do it, study the figures.

Fifteen million people to be fed and sheltered this coming winter. Three million five hundred thousand families, seven hundred and fifty thousand single men and women. How far would a billion dollars, if it were available, go in a year? Divide a billion - and of course it is not that -

divide it by three million five hundred thousand families - how much for the year? \$285.72 - \$23.81 a month to feed and shelter a family of four. But remember there are seven hundred fifty thousand bachelors and spinsters to be considered. But I find many people quite convinced that they should some how look after themselves, that if anybody is to starve it better be bachelors and spinsters.

No, the money, even if we had the full billion, would not go around without extra help. There is the extra help. There is the incredible generosity of the poor to the poor. Millions have been sheltered in the last two years, by the willingness of families to double up. Then there comes in to help out what is called invisible relief - the aid in money, food, lodging that friends and neighbors give. The aid of the churches and the lodges, the aid of the great corporations to employees, the rent waived by landlords, the cancelling of debts - all of these things come in that cannot be calculated and will continue to come in as long as there are needy in the country.

But when all is done there is still a long list of human needs which can only be satisfied through that vast private machinery that has been built up in this country in the last fifty years, those agencies for looking after

health, providing hospitals, nurses, summer camps, tuberculosis sanitarium, agencies for caring for the orphan, the underfed child, for looking after the boy and girl, providing for leisure hours, for recreation - the whole great range of activities which this country has come to believe are essential to the well-being of its citizenship and has so supported and encouraged that they have become an integral part of our community life.

Now as President Roosevelt sees the present picture <sup>of these organizations under</sup> the <sup>these</sup> services are essential to his Recovery program and in September when at the call of that devoted public servant, Newton D. Baker, the leaders in the organization fostering them, met in Washington to consider their Fall and Winter campaign, <sup>- a ~~provision for human need~~ the conference was named,</sup> it was he and Mrs. Roosevelt who first welcomed them.

They were a remarkable and a stirring group representing as they did the social conscience of this nation, its determination to see that men and women get more than the mere food by which to live but that they get that which makes the life the food insures worth living - health - interest - good cheer.

Thirty four different organizations were represented in the gathering, all of which have written into

their titles words like American - National - Federation - showing that these are not local undertakings but belonged to the whole country.

The gathering was the more impressive when you remember the comparative youth of its parts. Scarcely one of them more than fifty years old. It is just forty four years since Jane Addams opened Hull House in Chicago and here was the National Federation of Settlements, Inc., an organization out of which has come all sorts of movements which contribute to the betterment of the life of the needy as well as a stimulating spirit which has come to *permeate* the country.

Some of us can remember when we first heard of the Salvation Army. It came to the United States in 1880. Many can remember when we first heard of a Boy Scout, a Camp Fire Girl, The coming of the trained nurse not only for homes and hospitals but in industries, in schools - a servant of country and city districts - a blessed service, is within the memory of great bodies of the living. What would we do without these agencies, without our public health associations, our work for the blind, the crippled, the tubercular, for family and child welfare? These have become essential elements of American life, expressions of the

National desire and National will that men and women in increasing numbers find life in America a good and hopeful thing.

A clever Frenchman has said that the chief enemy of human kind is the self-interested man. One hears a great deal about him and how we are to get rid of him. In this gathering you had his antithesis, the man who gives himself to the interest of all struggling for universal <sup>Welfare</sup> ~~good~~ health and good cheer. What he and his fellows have done has in fifty years come to be in effect an immense National league accepted and supported by the public. So strong has it become that here was the President of the United States recognizing it as an essential element in his Recovery Program.

I think Mr. Roosevelt must have been deeply moved when he faced the men and women gathered on the White House lawn and there was no question but he felt at home among them, for both he and Mrs. Roosevelt have been for years the active supporters of the whole gamut of activities represented. The tradition of the Roosevelts, it must be remembered, is not alone political, it is social service. <sup>his branch</sup> Young Theodore Roosevelt was there to prove that/whether in or out of the White House doesn't forget that. He had arrived

the night before from Europe. A wireless from the Boy Scouts had told him what was going on and he had hurried down. "I know half the people here, have worked with them," he told me at the dinner when the crowd gathered that night. *H* "A Mobilization for Human Needs," was the official name of the Conference and the President gave his time and attention to the Conference because in his judgment the neglect of their needs would be a serious blow to the whole Recovery Program.

Who has not wondered at the incredible patience of the millions of unemployed and half-employed through the long four years now ending. "How do you explain it?" I asked the head of a great industry with tens of thousands of men coming in for their one day or two days work, going home to work their gardens, yet always orderly.

"There is only one answer," he said. "They believe we are doing all we can to get them work and when we cannot do that we are doing all we can to see they do not suffer."

There you have what has carried the country through without revolt - the belief on the part of the great majority that a really prodigious effort was being made to see them through.

Now in this effort the hospital, the visiting nurse, the play ground, the summer camp, the settlement, the Y's, the Traveller's Aid, all our great private social organizations have played an enormous part. The state promised none should starve, but it was their business to see that none died of despair.

But do their best men and women have died of despair in this long trial and more will do so if understanding and sympathetic efforts do not keep them in courage.

Bread and shelter alone will not do it. The commonest observation of those who have dealt first hand with the suffering in these last four years is the steady way in which the unemployed have lost morale, lost faith in themselves, lost hope of recovery. Despondency, cynicism, doubt of the social and political institutions under which we live have spread.

Can we wonder? If you had done all the things you were told in youth that you should do in order to insure your material stability, had studied hard, learned a trade or profession, gone into it with ardor and determination, found your place and then suddenly was cut off, if do your best there was no other point where you could be fitted in,

if you saw gradually all that you had put by for the rainy day disappearing and that final degradation to one trained as we have been trained, saw yourself dependent on public charity, are you sure your faith in things as they are would continue?

It is hard to see how anyone can escape the lack of confidence, stifling apathy, if caught in this stress and unable to escape.

But things are picking up, you say. Gradually men and women will have work. But in the mean time fifteen million are to be fed and sheltered by public funds. But how about the sick, the child, the old, those who suffer from accidents - how about keeping up the courage of this fifteen million? Who is going to do these things if our Mobilization for Human Needs fail?

At the present moment there is not one of the agencies essential in this business of keeping up courage that is not curtailing its work for lack of money. Nurse service all over the country has been cut down, whole wards in hospitals have been closed and the sick are turned back at the door. Where do they go? Women in child birth find no beds. Mr. Hopkins declares that there are states where the very insane asylums have been closed and the insane turned

back to the poor houses where you find them chained as was the way one hundred years ago.

To take care of these evils is what this Mobilization for Human Needs means. Unless they do it who can guarantee that the long patience of the fifteen million will not end in revolt against the very Recovery Act, itself?

But it is not alone the unemployed for whom these services must be kept up. The men and women who are going back to work need them. Few of them are not physically what they were three, two, one year ago. Malnutrition has made big inroads on our national vitality, particularly on that of children.

Nor should we forget that most of those coming back to work are in debt, all their possessions that could be pawned, pawned. Their first task must be setting themselves straight. They will have little or no money for doctors and nurses if need comes, nothing for recreation, nothing for the children. It is risky business to take from them now the support of those agencies which we have taught them to use, to trust, to regard as their right. Let them slip and something quite as dangerous to the country as malnutrition comes. And that is the loss of confidence in the intention,

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the determination of people not to neglect, health and happiness.

The work is costly. The allied organizations represented in Washington calculated that the community chest, which in our cities and larger towns usually raises and distributes the money and according to the needs of the various agencies, needed this year seventy three million dollars, and that is what this Mobilization for Human Needs means - a nation wide individual effort - every man and woman in it according to his ability.

We are hearing a good deal of talk these days about the New Deal being the end of the individual. Henceforth he is to take orders. Henceforth, if I am any judge of the New Deal he is to exert himself mind and body as he has not for long years, to keep himself, those to whom he is obligated, the country of which he is apart on their feet. That seems to me to be the meaning of what Mr. Roosevelt so emphatically told the Conference for the Mobilization of Human Needs when he welcomed it.

"There are a great many people in this country who are going to say, 'Oh, I have given, I am helping through such and such an organization, through such and such an individual; leave me out.' There is no such thing as being left out. They can't be left out. They have got to join you.

"The government cannot get along without you. The Federal, state and local government can't. The whole period we are going through will come back in the end to individual citizens, to individual responsibility. Give them this message from me - this work is an essential part of the government's program, the program of the people of the United States to bring us back to where this country has a right to be."

And how is all this to be done by a worn and battered people? I think Eleanor Roosevelt found the key when talking to the Conference. She urged that the women of the country go out (as she is doing and always has done, though that she did not say) and satisfy themselves of the human needs of their communities, come close to the problems, feel them, make <sup>them</sup> understand. If the women of the land would mobilize themselves for this job of knowing, understanding, can one doubt that means would not be found to carry on?

Wisely, gently, she warned of what might be if they shirked the task, "<sup>opportunity</sup> ~~or pretending~~" she called it.

"This is the greatest opportunity that we have ever had for educating ourselves as citizens. If we fail to take this opportunity we may possibly find that we have failed

to start ourselves upward and onward. We may find that even though the trend of business has gone up, our civilization may be built on foundations which bear too harshly on certain human elements and that, therefore, we cannot go on and we cannot go up."

Mrs. Roosevelt is right <sup>if</sup> "we gotta do it," not only for those in need but for our own soul's sake. Shall all this vast suffering be endured in vain? Shall we <sup>growing</sup> treat/recovery as something which is to free us so that we may go back to selfish, irresponsible ways - "Let the Government do it?" If so, then indeed the suffering has been in vain.