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The Wanderers' Club has always offered its members their best opportunity for checking up on those exhibits of Americana which chiefly interest them. It is a small affair - not over twenty-five. (Wanderers, by the way, is not its name!) But it has behind it some forty years of experience, at least five of its present members being sons or grandsons of its founders.

The Wanderers have only one Rally in a year. This restraint comes from the fact that only one man from a state belongs - twenty-five states so scattered geographically that they include all sections of the country - twenty-five cities none under one hundred thousand, none over five hundred thousand. This annual meeting they call the Major. It takes a broken bone to keep a man away from it. However, if six or more happen to be within reach they are allowed by their unwritten constitution - only article in that constitution! - to hold what they call a Minor.

As a rule their meetings take on a good deal of the character of a Rotary for these Wanderers are all successful men, active bankers, manufacturers, merchants, with enormous local pride, pride in their country clubs, parks, good roads, hospitals, and most emphatically their success in eradicating dead-beats from their communities. They hunt them down as diligently as they hunt malignant germs and this holds true whether it is a natural loafer who prefers begging to working or a natural skinflint who prefers hoarding to sharing.

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As would be expected their meetings are usually jovial and jubilant. But in August they held a Minor which was unhappy. One of their chief joys was the cause of it - the Man from the Desert they call him - his city being in the vast territory known fifty years ago as the Arid Region. Generally he radiates well-being and satisfaction. But there was nothing of either about him this time. What was the matter? He was not slow in making it known.

"Town shot all to pieces," he declared.

"What do you mean? Bank failed? Taxes uncollectible?"

"Nothing of the sort. We are sound as ever if we haven't much money. The trouble is we are broke out all over with charity rackets. I never believed it could happen to us. We have always had two big ideas. You know what they are. We went in for relief that built up men and women, saved or restored self-respect. We never called that charity - never allowed that word used - we called it Human Salvage. Everybody understands salvage in an industrial town like ours. We held them mainly by the force of public opinion, the contempt stronger among our poor than our rich for a man who does not do his part.

"When there was illness or accident or bad luck we looked on it as a community obligation and there was a lot of pride in what we did, for it was community business, not merely rich men's business. That is we have always taken care of ourselves and then last year along comes the big State boss and tells us that there is $100,000 of Federal Relief money coming to us. We told him we didn't need it, didn't want it, but we couldn't help ourselves. The money not only came into the town but a Bureau was set up to distribute it, a Bureau of politicians helped out by people who mean

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well enough but who know nothing about those we deal with, who have no use for our ways of doing things. What they have done to a lot of the people we have been looking after for years trying to save their self-respect or restore it if they had lost it, you wouldn't believe. We have dozens now on relief rolls that we have kept off for years and there is nothing to be done about it. Business is steadily getting on its feet but the more people we put to work the more go on relief rolls and we don't know how to stop it."

Now this report (true if a bit camouflaged to protect the club which is almost fanatical in its notion of privacy) is significant because you cannot today get together a half dozen men and women really experienced in the problems incident to the meeting of human needs without more or less of the same complaint. A point and emphasis is given to such complaints by the disconcerting fact that while there has been a substantial increase in employment there has been a much greater increase in the numbers on relief rolls. In August it was estimated that the first stood at 40 per cent, the second at 73 per cent.

Now how are we to explain this? There is no manner of doubt that the intrusion by the politically minded which so disturbs the [illegible] from the Desert accounts in certain quarters for something of the increase. This was foreseen and voiced when in 1933 Congress made its first appropriation - $500,000,000. The Administrator of Federal Relief, Harry Hopkins, was prompt and emphatic in warning against any attempt on the part of politicians to administer relief. [illegible]

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"You cannot fool with this relief business on a political basis," he said. "Some people have tried it. I have no doubt in some parts of the United States that it is done. The Federal Relief Administration has no intention of tolerating political interference in the administration of public relief to the millions of people in this country."

Along with the politician Mr. Hopkins classified that individual who generally goes along with him the man or woman who knows nothing about administration but needs a job and gets it.

"There is a perfectly amazing lack of responsibility of people who are willing to turn the administration over to incompetent people. Why, even a bootlegger hires somebody who knows his business to cut his liquor. Great guns, why aren't we entitled in the administration of seventy million dollars of taxpayers' money a month, used in the care of fifteen million people, why aren't we entitled to skilled and competent direction in the care for those people?"

That was the way Mr. Hopkins felt about it in the beginning. It is the way he feels about it now.

~~But~~ Once those great sums were voted by Congress there was no human foresight and force that could have prevented an attack by a certain element, but while their influence accounts for a percentage of the increase in the numbers on the relief rolls, I am convinced it is a comparatively small percentage.

Certain things must be remembered when we complain that a 40 per cent increase on pay rolls does not produce a 40 per cent decrease in relief rolls. It has been reckoned by those familiar with the figures that only 1 in every 10 of those who have been re-employed had been on relief. Those first taken back are properly the substantial workers, long with the industry. In the employer's mind, the jobs "belonged" to them.

But how had they been getting on? Some had nest eggs, insurance, bank accounts, stock in the industry to which they belonged, mem-

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bership in fraternities which prepare for the evil days which all human experience proves comes and must be provided for if lived through - the seven lean years to be cared for by the seven fat.

Generally speaking men and women who have had the wisdom to provide for a bad time are people who know how to piece out savings. They understand "subsistence farming." Thousands upon thousands of people who never heard the term until now have from time immemorial looked to it as part of their support. Little farms, thousands of them - gardens, more thousands, exist throughout the country particularly in the neighborhood of industrial towns.

There is one great mining company in this country which for twenty-five years has seen to it that the eight thousand families in its towns had opportunities for gardens and on an average seven thousand five hundred of them have had gardens in good and in bad times, filling cellars with vegetables and canned stuff, sometimes in summer selling vegetables.

Savings, subsistence farming, odd jobs account for no small number of the one-half of the unemployed who have not been on Federal Relief. No insignificant number is accounted for by that energy and ingenuity which leads men and women in time of stress to seek opportunity, force it. Hundreds have set up little businesses in the last four years which in more than one case have developed into substantial ones.

But there are many, many people in this one-half pretty well worn out with their struggle. Their savings are exhausted. A garden may keep a family in food - a few hens may give eggs and an occasional "chicken in the pot," but where is the money to come from for taxes, up-keep or rent if he does not own his place? With what is he to buy fuel, clothes? Probably the largest part of those added to the relief rolls since employment began to increase has come from those who have weathered four years but

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have nothing left for the fifth.

But if I understand the ~~man from the desert~~, his complaint goes much deeper than ~~the fact that he thinks that~~ through the efforts of politicians and untrained workers, people in his town are being put on relief rolls that have no business there. What alarms him is what they are doing to a fifty years effort to build up in his town a system under which those in need could be brought back where they could take care of their own needs - a system of rehabilitation instead of one of disintegration.

This alarm is shared by many people. It is one of the phases of relief administration that should be squarely faced. The idea that men and women should not be allowed to go to pieces because they can no longer meet even such fundamental needs as food and shelter, that they should be rebuilt, came in with what we call Organized Charity. Every man and woman in the country over fifty who once was accustomed to giving to the beggar, the tramp, remembers the struggle he had with himself not to give to all who asked, but to give his sympathy, his time and his money to building up institutions which would help cut off the beggars and the tramp at the source.

Rapidly there was developed a fine program for holding together crumbling families, for caring for dependent children, for preventing delinquency by giving boys and girls clubs, playgrounds, vocational work, incentive to decency and effort, for caring for illness through hospitals and nursing service, and men and women were trained to carry out the program. Between the institutions necessary for the work largely supported by private funds and the local relief work there has come to be increasing co-operation.

To do anything to break down this system would be parallel to breaking down the scientific management based on experiment and training

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which we find in many great industries. But that is what is happening, not only is our sound and practical service for meeting human needs being demoralized by the obvious difficulties of mass relief but on all sides the fact of Federal Relief is being seized on by former supporters of such essential institutions as hospitals, nursing services, family restoration as a reason for backing down on contributions. "Let the government do it - we pay taxes."

But nobody is paying Federal taxes to support our hospitals, our nurses, our organized charities. The Federal government taxes only for food and shelter to supplement the state, county, municipal taxes until such times as what we call "recovery" arrives.

In the meantime we cannot afford to let our great welfare agencies starve, nor can men and women who still have something to pay taxes on and with, afford to forget their part in their upbuilding and their responsibility to stand by in need. Who today is giving ten per cent of his income to support Human Welfare? Yet there was a time when men who realized their social responsibility talked in terms of the ancient tithe and many religiously observed it. Before the writer is an accounting of one man's tithing. It is entered in four little books, six by three and a half inches, the ordinary ten cent paper bound note book. On the outside in a clear strong hand - LORD'S BOX. Look within and you will find on the title page "Accounts with the Lord's Box." The first account runs from January '83 to December '93. The second picks up the account from January '94 and carries it to August 1903 when the book gave out and a new one was bought. The third carries the Box from September 1903 to December 31, 1927. The fourth and last begins with January 1, 1928 and its last entry is of November 7th of the same year, within two months of his death.

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That is, these little books give the accounts running over forty five years of steady giving of ten per cent of all money earned by the man who kept them.

This man, David L. Holbrook by name, was a minister whose salary seems never to have been over $1400 a year. Regularly he gave ten per cent of whatever it was. You find it credited properly month by month in the Lord's Box. And he gave ten per cent of all the little sums that came his way. There was a time when the Church paid the Personage rent and always ten per cent is credited to the Lord. He sang sometimes and received fees, and ten per cent went to the Lord, as did ten per cent of the marriage fees and other small royalties and the whole was painstakingly distributed to those institutions which he believed most useful to his world.

Who can match that today? Certainly it is not to be matched by reading the reports of giving by Federal income tax payers. Take the records for 1928 - our most prosperous year. The returns included 111,123 persons whose average income was $1,749. Their contributions to Human Needs averaged not ten per cent but 2.2 per cent. Drop to the bottom of the list - the biggest incomes, $5,000,000 and over - there are twenty-six of them averaging $10,763,077 each. These persons gave just half of what Mr. Holbrook gave or five per cent. Five per cent netted a tidy average sum, $537,185, but it was only half of the amount it would have been if Mr. Holbrook had been doing the giving.

Not to support our needed agencies now, to find excuse in the burden of Federal tax is like hauling down a flag in battle and the worst of it is that it weakens what is the most important thing in the United States, or any Democracy, the individual and his collective community efforts. They are and always have been the strength of this country. They have been worked out in local habitats; these habitats have become our

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great experiment stations - laboratories - for learning how to do things, things industrial, educational, social, philanthropic.

The country is not built from the top, it is built from the bottom by these collective efforts. The great problem in this country is to save what is good in them, to correct what is evil and go on building. The fundamental criticism ~~the men of the Wanderers' Club~~ had of Federal Relief was not that pork and cotton came to them where they did not need it, that money was poured in with orders to make work for people to do when already the community was looking after its people, it was that their local personal responsibility which they were meeting with courage was invaded, that self-respect at both ends of the line among those who received and who gave was weakened, the one reverting to his old begging psychology the other to his hoarding.

~~A serious fear affected the Wanderers, too - one that is haunting many people, the fear that the thing has come to stay.~~

~~The Federal Relief does not~~ pretend to be any more than an emergency. What we could have done without it no man can say. It was essential at the moment, like building ships, training men in war times. It was done on a grand scale because the emergency was on a grand scale.

It has only come to stay if the people of the United States who have been running their local affairs give up the job with the hope that all of these cares that they have assumed in the past and that they have been managing with more or less success are going to be taken off their shoulders, that the only thing they will have to do henceforth - and which they can do with infinite grumbling - is to pay taxes. No greater disaster could come upon the United States than this releasing the individual and the locality from this fundamental obligation to look after those neighbors who for one reason or another are ~~in need~~.

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Third Numbering the people of the U.S.
has required the Census Bureau to provide.

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