

NO, LET'S KEEP CAMP LAND INVIOLETE AS A NATURAL PRESERVE

Reprint of a letter sent to Camping Magazine by Julian Salomon, Director, Planning and Construction Section, Camping Division, Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. in response to an article titled "Multipurpose Management of Camp Lands" which had appeared in an earlier issue.

An article in the "Business Review" of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston made a strong plea to private and organization camps to permit lumbering and hunting on their sites, as a means of increasing revenue. The article is based on the premise that natural resources are "locked up," unless they are exploited for immediate gain. It charged some camp directors with being interested in "preservation only."

The fallacy of this point of view is that the areas were acquired and are being preserved for an entirely different purpose. Like our national parks, their greatest values are inspirational and spiritual. But beauty has a cash value, too. This the article admits and then promptly overlooks. The article mentions that parents spend \$80,000,000 to send 30,000 children to camps in New England. That's a pretty good return on 160,000 acres, particularly when most of the land could not be utilized for other purposes. Do we have to try to squeeze a few more dollars from this acreage by "harvesting" the so-called mature timber? Wouldn't this be killing the goose that laid the Golden Egg?

The writer ignores the fact that there are two concepts of land management. The forestry concept holds that land should be managed for the orderly production and consumption of trees as a renewable crop. The park concept is that some land should be held inviolate as a natural spectacle for aesthetic, educational and recreational purposes.

The one concept looks upon our forest lands as a valuable crop to be perpetuated by scientific management and consumed as a benefit to the nation's economy. The other looks upon forests as a resource of cultural value to the nation, in that its preservation and management ministers to the mind and spirit and provides recreation in the highest sense of the term. Both have as their end the satisfaction of human wants. But the techniques and principles of management are different. They cannot be combined.

I believe camps should be kept in the park category. Once you start using camp stumpage as currency, you are lost. You cannot have your bread and eat it too. Let us remember the basic purpose for which camp sites are acquired and limit our tree cutting to trees that are dangerous to campers or to those that might be a fire hazard.

As for hunting, there are thousands of acres on which it may take place. Let us also keep our camps as wildlife sanctuaries.

