



## Gratia A. Countryman and Family Papers.

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It has been quite apparent to every honest observer that there has been, throughout the country, ill considered and discriminatory retrenchment upon the educational and cultural interests of the community. Just when the young people could use this period to advantage for further education, they are denied sufficient educational opportunity. The young people of today have got to get us out of the present mess; upon them will devolve the problems to be solved and if they do not get the intellectual and spiritual encouragement now, it just cannot be made up to them later. We are simply unloading our perplexities upon them, and denying them the utmost in education and direction which they should have.

Just now when crime is beyond any precedent among our youth, we cut off our parks and playgrounds, and the natural and healthful exercise which we have freely furnished in the past. Just when men and women have enforced leisure-- and perhaps they will always have more than they have had-- just when they could study and read in the people's continuation school, the public<sup>library</sup>/libraries must cut off book purchases and shorten their hours. We are willing to spend



for the basic physical needs, but there is reaction against the very institutions which have built up the finest traditions in American life.

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It is not strange. We must recognize that tax reduction is necessary, that there should be elimination of waste and extravagance, simplification of governmental machinery, and a rigid examination of all tax supported institutions. No one should object to the most searching investigation. But, it is distinctly a crisis and it is a challenge to the people to consider whether some reductions won't cost more in social chaos than any present savings that can temporarily be made. It is constructive economy that is needed.

Citizens have been awakening to the fact, and the device which groups have suggested is the formation of local Citizens' Councils. The movement has begun with national organizations. Something like 52 National Associations are actively engaged in the movement. The clearing house for information is in the National Municipal League Headquarters in New York. The movement is now



financed and a field agent is available to help organize local Citizens' Leagues. The gentleman with whom we have been in correspondence is Mr. Howard P. Jones, Editor of the National Municipal Review, who has just recently been in Milwaukee and Madison.

The whole idea of these Citizens' Councils is to unite local civic groups, luncheon clubs, Chambers of Commerce, influential organizations of all kinds, whose representatives would endeavor to support necessary local economies but without sacrifice of essential services. These Citizens' Councils would study the real problems, would try to think of the city government as a co-operative business plan for the mutual good of its citizens, but ~~it~~ would be most interested to stem this tide of reaction against fundamental services which would send us back into barbarism.

It is quite essential that there be prompt action by leading citizens in every town. There is urgent need for local leaders to join themselves together in defence of our most cherished institutions which have grown up since pioneer days, and which must not be overthrown thoughtlessly in this crisis.



This citizens' movement for constructive economy is a backfire to the destructive drive against what all thinking men would ordinarily protect. The movement has started to arouse citizens to the danger which is threatening the very foundations of the social services.

I believe that we might in our respective towns propose to the League of Women Voters or to the Rotary Club or any organization which happens to be civic minded that a representative group get together for the organization of such a Council. We might lay before them the usefulness of the library, the improvements which could be made, the possibilities of adequate library service, and start the plan rolling.

We may have to answer challenging questions, and undergo close scrutiny, but we believe that we have everything to gain from such scrutiny. The Citizens' Council can say many more things in our behalf than we could for ourselves, and when the citizens, through their own representatives, speak in our behalf it will have more telling influence.

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