

WHY LET THE KIDS SWELTER IN THE CITIES?

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One of the worst features of the unbearable heat waves that periodically engulf our communities during mid-

summer is the fact that the children have to sweat through them in our stifling cities. This is all quite needless. There are hundreds of thousands of acres of nearby cool farm country

and forest land beckoning to the youngsters to come out and be happy there.

What ought to be done is to organize things so that during the hot months of July and August the whole mass of city children should be moved out into the country and to the

beaches. This should be done not only in the case of New York, where the kids fry during the two hot months, but also in the many other big cities in the humid belt.

It's about time the workers in their unions should insist that their children, from infancy on up through

the school ages, get a break in the summertime. They should not merely have a week or so in the country, but the whole summer. This would be of incalculable benefit to the kids, not to speak of relief to their heat-harassed parents. Long summer vacations would vastly improve the children's health, would give them a much-needed acquaintance with country life, and would be a real blow against the appalling present-day juvenile delinquency.

It is intolerable that the workers should permit their children to sweat out the summers in the hot and filthy cities. The whole atmosphere of the cities in the summertime is detrimental to child life, not to mention child happiness. Besides the unpleasantness and unhealthfulness of the steaming weather, the playground facilities in all cities are utterly inadequate. Often they are so bureaucratically managed that actually fewer kids can use the organized playing fields than formerly played there when they were just vacant lots.

As things now stand, in the New York area, only relatively a few people are able to pay the fabulous prices demanded for country cottages and can keep their children there during the hot months. Other children, also comparatively a fortunate handful, may get a week or so in the country from some organization or other, or may have an occasional boat trip on the Hudson. But all this is merely

a drop in the bucket. The great mass of children hardly leave the city at all in the summer.

What is needed is to send all the city's kids to the country, and for the whole summer. And this should be done, not as a matter of charity or as an advertising stunt by a Hearst paper, but as the natural right of children to two months of the year in the green fields and woods or on the ocean beaches. To many kids today, a week in the country would seem like a week in paradise if they could but get it. In this matter the writer speaks from his own experience as a slum-raised youngster.

Of course it would cost some money to move the armies of kids of New York and other great cities out into the country for the summer. At that, however, the cost per kid would be little. But what of the expense? This country is lousy with money, with so much money in fact that it soon will be choking upon it in an economic crisis. Actually, the mass movement of the kids to the country in summer would be a stabilizing influence in our insane economic system.

The trade unions in the cities should take up this matter and put an end to the shame of their kids sweltering in the cities while the children of the well-to-do enjoy themselves in the country. If the unions will display a dime's worth of activity, their children also can go to the country.