

CONSERVATION

The Young Executive presents case histories in the fight for conservation of national resources. The tragic story of past experiences proves the need for, and points the way to, unified public interest under the aegis of the Junior Chambers of Commerce.

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By Edward Logelin

Tom Harris is on relief. Ten years ago Tom Harris was a self-supporting, up-standing American citizen, proudly supporting himself and his family by his job in the factory located on the banks of a great river. For its raw material that factory looked to the great river, and from the gifts which nature had so generously bestowed on the region, thousands like Tom Harris gained their livelihood.

To that region came a promoter with an idea — a scheme for a big community development which was adopted and put through in record time. Against it were raised the protests of only a few conservationists — voices crying in the wilderness of public ignorance of the effects of the project. The project was completed.

Today, the river, robbed of its resources by the changes created when the new development was completed, no longer provides a livelihood for Tom Harris and his fellow workers. He, and they, bewildered by the turn in their fortunes, can only turn to the Government for aid. The factories where they worked are idle; machines grow rusty, and investors find their investment bringing no returns.



Photographed by William Finley — Field Naturalist.

Where this picture was taken in 1905 today there now stands a vast stretch of desert country incapable of supporting any wild life. This scene shows lower Lake Klamath at a time when it was one of the country's great wild-life breeding areas. Drained by private interests which had purchased the land from the government in the vain hope of starting a real estate boom in agricultural land, the region is today barren, and only a few cacti stand where once wild life swarmed in abundance.

It is the problem of thousands of Tom Harrises that the United States Junior Chamber of Commerce tackled when it took its place with leaders of the Conservation movement. It holds no brief for or against community projects — public or private. It only asks that each individual undertaking be first carefully studied to determine which will be more valuable to the community in the future — the business

developed or the natural resources of the stream that may be destroyed. Its main job, as many leaders of the conservation movement see it, is to focus public attention upon our natural resources and the dangers they face — to make articulate the problems of Tom Harris and his fellows.

“But,” many will say, “this is a fictitious incident. The story of Tom Harris is simply a maudlin attempt to create interest in our feathered and finny friends.” If the phrase had not grown trite through over-use, we would say, like the statesman in the brown derby, “Let’s look at the record.” And having said it, we would consider a few tragic and typical case histories.

Case History One: — The Connecticut River Project. Once on the banks of this river the industry made impossible by the resources of the river was worth two million dollars a year to residents of the region. Today it has been destroyed probably be-

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WILLIAM FINLEY,
Field Naturalist — Nature Magazine
SAYS:

There is a job for the United States Junior Chamber of Commerce in the conservation field. Through this organization the attention of the public can be focused on new projects and public policy can become the main factor in deciding whether a specific project will prove beneficial to the community in the future. There is no need to combat industry or government projects. Rather, by bringing about a mutual respect between various organizations and increasing cooperation, the United States Junior Chamber of Commerce can do much to focus attention on conservation and protect the wild life resources of the United States.