

With: 3208/17/41

Mr. Zolner

With Mr. Cribbette's Compliments

COPY

SECRET

16th September, 1941.

Mr. Stettinius,  
515 - 22nd Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C.

~~Mr. Hayer Miller~~

S. F. Harris  
19/9

Dear Stettinius,

I enclose a memo. on the past history, future prospects and requirements of the Civilian Technical Corps.

I shall be pleased to discuss the matter at any time which may be convenient to you.

Yours

(Sgd.) A.T. HARRIS.

Air Marshal.

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and Lord Hankey alternative measures for dealing with



Memorandum on proposals for the recruitment of an  
American Civilian Technical Corps.

There is an acute shortage of skilled manpower in the United Kingdom, and there are many gaps in the ranks of the Royal Navy, the Army and the Royal Air Force of skilled personnel required for servicing and maintaining technical equipment and armaments.

In the Spring of this year, the United States Government was approached with a view to obtaining technical assistance from American citizens in the endeavour to meet these deficiencies. As a result, an agreement was reached with the State Department permitting the recruitment of upwards of 30,000 United States technicians of various trades to be formed into an organisation known as the Civilian Technical Corps. Members of the Corps were to be of civilian status and not to be employed on combatant duties. Full details of the Conditions of Service and Disciplinary Code are contained in the attached copy of the printed Enrolment Form.

The recruiting campaign opened on the 17th June with a broadcast appeal by Lord Beaverbrook. In the House of Commons on the following day the Secretary of State for Air announced the formation of the C.T.C. and simultaneously the project was announced in Washington. Six days later the President commended service in the Corps to U.S. citizens at a Press Conference. A central office was established in New York for handling all applications, and the services of Earl Newsom & Co. of New York were engaged for the control of publicity. Notwithstanding the widespread publicity given throughout the United States press at the inception of the recruitment campaign the response was disappointing and it soon became evident that the goal of 30,000 technicians was unlikely to be reached by this form of recruitment. By the 2nd July, for example, only some 36 applicants had survived the various preliminary tests (medical, security and trade) out of a total number of 2,000 applications received.

On the 9th July Air Marshal Harris approached Mr. Hopkins in order to obtain the benefit of his advice, and possibly assistance, in stimulating the interest of American technicians in the Corps. Shortly afterwards, Mr. Hopkins proceeded to England and discussed with Mr. Harriman and Lord Hankey alternative measures for dealing with the



problem. The outcome of these discussions is embodied in the aide memoire handed by Lord Hankey to Mr. Harriman on the 29th July, 1941. This document indicates that Mr. Hopkins, on his return, would explore the feasibility of forming a special Corps of United States citizens, to be employees of the American Government and serving in their interest. The American Government, under this proposal, would assume responsibility for any wages and other payments in \$ in the United States, whilst the British Government would be responsible for accommodation and feeding in the United Kingdom.

In the interim, the New York Office of the C.T.C., which has had the assistance of Mr. Murray Mitchell as American adviser, have been canvassing all practicable measures for stimulating recruitment into the British C.T.C. Organised publicity has been undertaken and, in addition, a number of Committees of prominent United States citizens in certain important cities, are assisting with recruitment. In the result, a steady flow of applications is being received but it is quite clear that these efforts will not succeed, within a reasonable period, in producing the skilled manpower which is so urgently required. Appendix I attached shows, for the period to 9th September, 1941, the numbers of applications received, the numbers accepted for enrolment in the Corps, the numbers rejected and the numbers still passing through their various preliminary tests. These figures, which represent the results of a recruiting campaign extending over three months, demonstrate that a new approach to the problem is necessary to achieve material results.

The lack of success which has attended the attempt to recruit skilled technicians through a British agency is, in our view, attributable mainly to the following causes:-

- (1) That expanding productive capacity in the armaments industries of the United States is making an increasing demand on the versatile type of skilled craftsman required and there is, in consequence, a diminishing reservoir upon which to draw
- (2) The wages offered for service in the British C.T.C. are unattractive compared with American standards. So long as the C.T.C. remains under British control this is virtually an insoluble problem. The rates offered are liberal



compared with United Kingdom standards for comparable classes of labour, and the introduction into the U.K. of American labour in British employ at rates of pay materially above those now offered would create a serious situation from the standpoint of the British wage structure generally.

These are difficulties which appear to point inevitably to the adoption of the proposal discussed in London for the formation of a Corps of American citizens employed and paid by the United States Government.

It is suggested that this proposal could be suitably implemented by the creation of a uniformed civilian organisation for maintenance and servicing, ancillary to the U.S. War Department, in much the same way as certain Maintenance Units of the Royal Air Force and the Ordnance Depots of the British Army are manned on a civilian footing. Members of such an organisation would, of course, have to be willing to serve overseas in order to gain the valuable experience essential to the defence of the United States. The cost of such a body, it is suggested, could thus be borne out of U.S. War Department Appropriations and so obviate any technical complications which might arise in relation to Lease Lend.

The formation of an American C.T.C. necessarily gives rise to the question of the future of the British C.T.C. The aide memoire handed to Mr. Harriman suggests that an American Corps need not necessarily be regarded as replacing the British Corps, but it is felt that competitive recruitment for the two Corps could not satisfactorily continue. The British C.T.C. obviously could not compete at rates of pay which would be inferior to the standards which would no doubt be adopted for the American Corps. Further, the difference in wage rates between the two Corps is bound to give rise to dissatisfaction in England among members of the British C.T.C., especially if they find themselves working under identical conditions in the same establishment, as is not improbable. Thus in the event of a decision to establish an American Corps it is a matter for consideration whether we should not only discontinue recruitment for a British C.T.C. but should merge existing members into the American organisation. This should give rise to no difficulty, in view of the more attractive terms of service in an American Corps.

Appendix II annexed details the numbers of skilled technicians required in the various trades.

15th Sept, 1940



APPENDIX I.

RESULTS OF RECRUITMENT FOR BRITISH C.T.C. UP TO

9th SEPTEMBER, 1941.

Applications received	3,200
Accepted for enrolment	220
Rejected	940
Under examination	2,040

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APPENDIX II.  
CIVILIAN TECHNICAL CORPS.  
IMMEDIATE REQUIREMENTS.

Radio mechanics	8,900
Wiremen	100
Electricians	1,250
Ordnance artificers	200
Fitters E.R.A. or fitter turners	200
Fitters, Air	10,500
Fitters, general	250
Fitters, armourer	500
Motor mechanics	1,800
Boilermakers	50
Coppersmiths	50
Instrument makers	1,150
Machine tool setters	300
Metal workers	150
Grinders precision	20
Welders, acetylene	50
Welders, electric	50
Armourers	170
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Total	25,690
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had been trying to get hold of  
Hacking for the first time. Success.