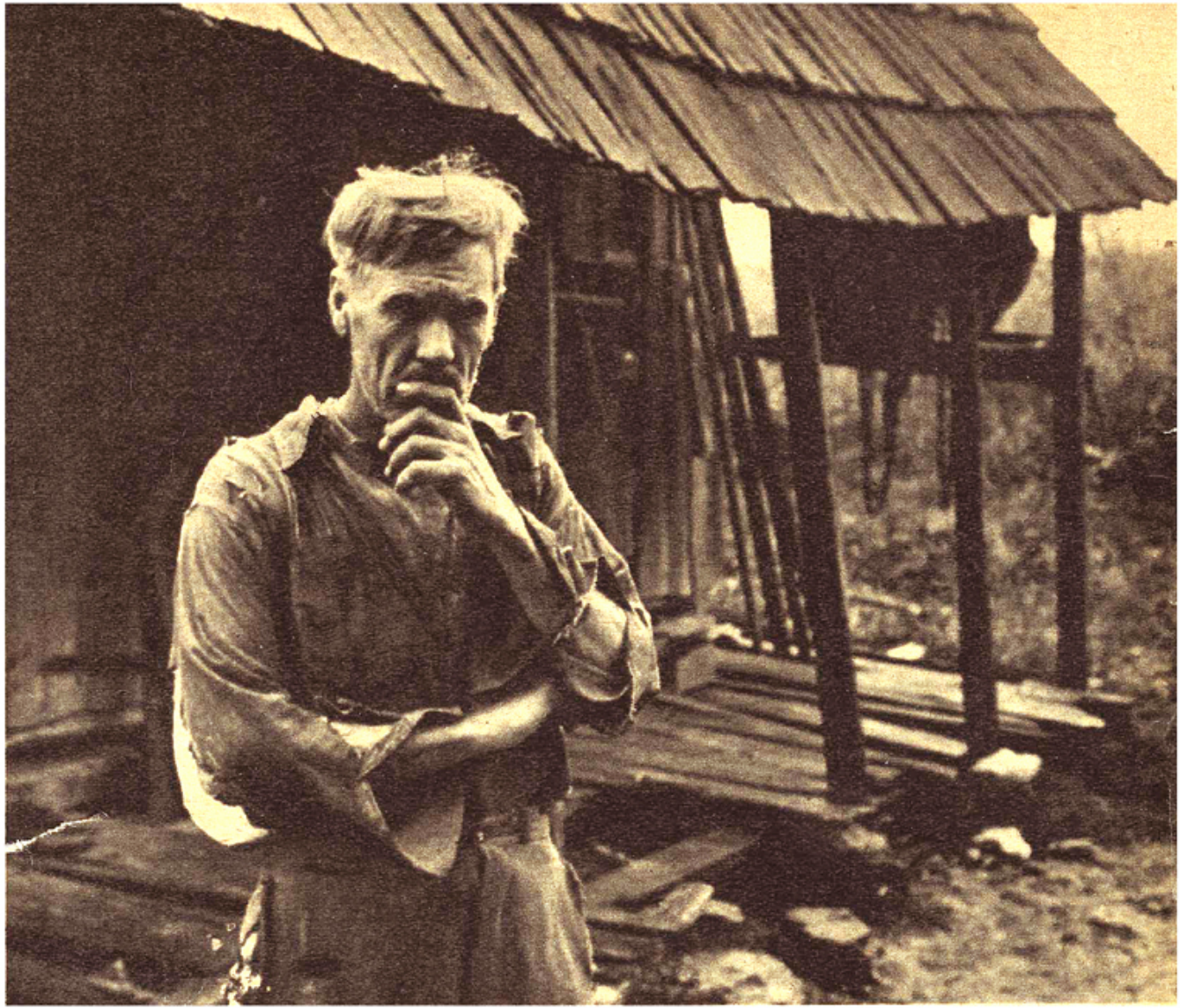


WE MUST HAVE A HOME

***Farm Security Administration Fights
For Dispossessed Farmer
And Homeless Migratory Worker***



TENANT FARMER SAM NICHOLS, of Boone County, Ark., was one of the million American agriculturists who had little hope for the future until advent of the Farm Security Administration.

JOE SMITH, the family man who is ineligible for military service, has no industrial skill and is being crowded off his land by expanding military reservations and defense factories, needn't worry about the future.

It matters not that we're fighting a war on, under and over all the seas and on half the continents of the earth. Uncle Sam is determined that there shall be no new, post-war army of "forgotten men" to make a mockery of all the things for which we are now fighting.

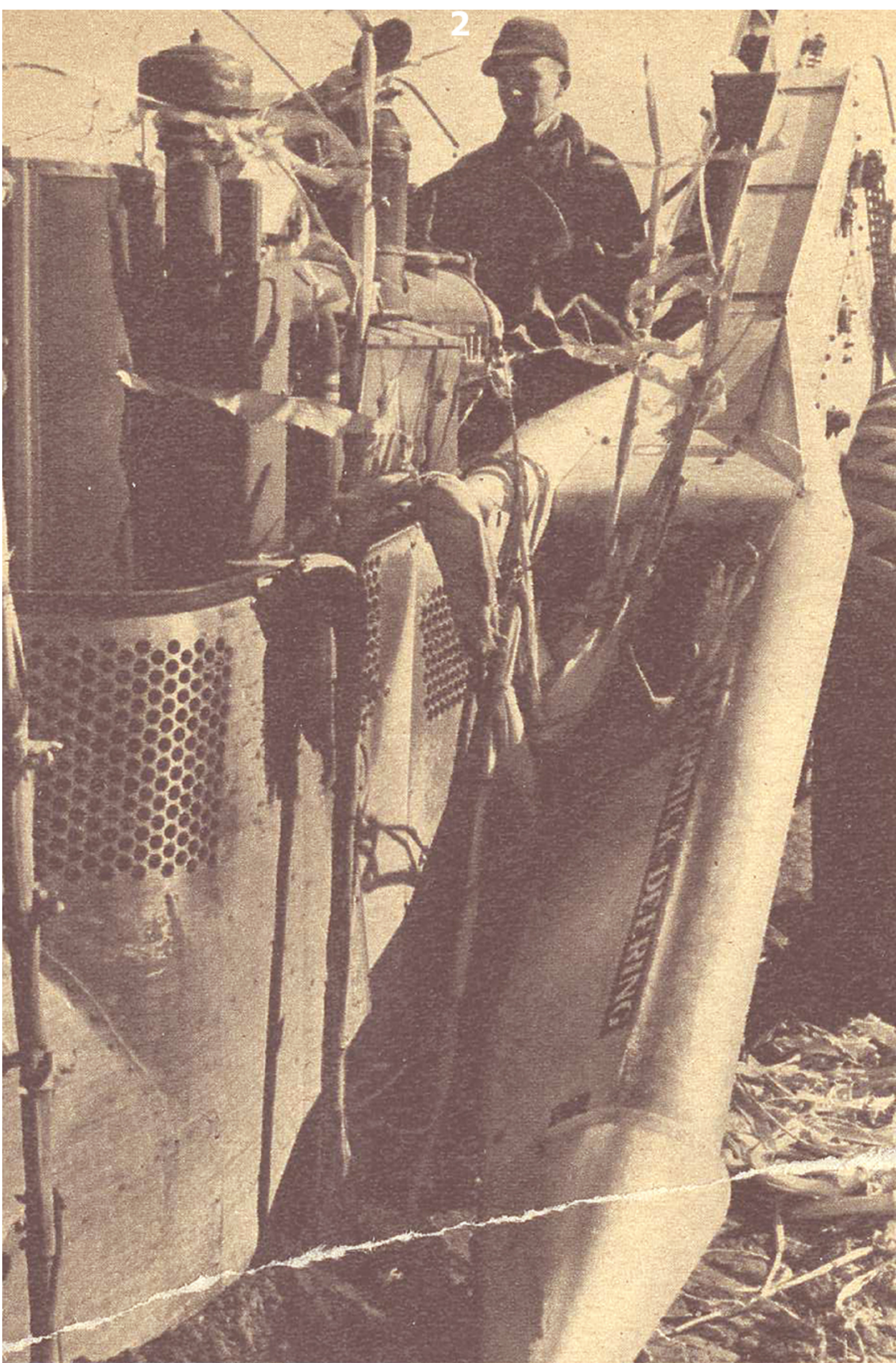
Chief among the groups of little fellows for whom the administration is striving to preserve social gains of the past decade, are the marginal farmers who have had to give up their land to industry or to the army.

There are about 15,000 such farmers off the soil already. By the end of 1942, there will be 25,000 more of them. This is a curious paradox in the face of looming shortages of farm labor and even farms. But paradoxes are sadly commonplace nowadays.

Of the 15,000 farm families already shorn of their good earth, only 3,000 have received any financial compensation. Most of the families were tenant farmers and sharecroppers—folks who had no financial stake in the land other than the livelihood they could coax out of it. Things are not too rosy for even the small landowners. It takes up to six months to collect from the government for the land it takes over. In the meanwhile, a farmer must feed, clothe and house himself and his family. And even when the check for the land arrives, it is hardly enough to keep the family going for long.

The problem of rehabilitating these little people has been taken over by the Farm Security Administration, one of the old-time New Deal alphabetical agencies which first won its spurs when it successfully transplanted farm families from poor land to productive land. FSA not only is taking over the care of these uprooted farm folk, but it has also been detailed to look out for migratory defense workers—the kind who can't find a place to live in overcrowded war-boom towns.

To give you some idea of the size of this lat-



NOT EVERY FARMER can afford a mechanical corn picker, but FSA co-operatives make many modern devices available to all.

ter job, try to hang on to a few of the following figures: FSA is going to set up 17,000 portable dormitories; 1,000 permanent houses; and 11,000 trailer homes. Fifty-eight camps incorporating all these types of dwellings have already been set up on the outskirts of factory towns. Another 50 are on the way.

But this job, of course, is merely a hobby compared with FSA's main task of caring for farmers in transition periods such as the present. Good thing it is that the New Deal got a head start on securing farmers against trouble in the form of drought, low prices and that old, mustached bogey: the mortgage-holder. Long before Hitler shook his fist across the Atlantic, Mr. Roosevelt, through the FSA, had provided loans and gentle-acting refinancing schemes for America's long-suffering farmers. Otherwise, farmers might not today be in the mood to feed a country which did little to feed them in years past. For, you will remember, it was the farm problem that threw Messrs. Hoover, Coolidge and Harding for a loss.

Let's flash back to 1933 and see what put these farm families back on their feet. In that year, a million farmers were parked squarely on Uncle Sam's backsteps in need of a handout. Farm prices were lowest in history—as was America's purchasing power. Because of obligations coming due and unsaleable crops, America's farmers could not even put themselves in the position of making money in years to come. They hadn't the capital to restock their farms and install modern farm equipment.

That's where the FSA came in. With FSA loans, farmers were able to buy cows, hogs, chickens and motor-driven plows. FSA experts taught them how to farm for their own needs as well as for the country's. Today, most of the farmers are well on their way to paying up their debts.

This would be just dandy if it were not for the fact that another farm problem of surpassing size has arisen out of the defense emergency. The U. S. will have to be not only the arsenal of democracy, but also the larder.



CONSTRUCTION WORKERS in Alexandria, La., had to be satisfied with sleeping quarters such as this 37-bed dormitory. At times they slept in shifts. To make matters worse, some of men housed here had influenza.

We must ultimately supply most of the world with pork, dairy products, poultry, grain, vegetables and fruit. The new accelerated production program requires an investment which few small farmers can make. And yet farmers small and large must be producing if we are to have all the food we and our Allies need. FSA has therefore made supplemental loans for the purpose of stimulating production. More crops is the cry. A few years ago, the cry was "plow it under." We have made a breathless transition from an economy of over-production to one of dangerous under-production.

Like the family doctor, the farmer learns something new every day—or should. FSA is doing all it can to speed up production by training its debtors in modern methods of feeding livestock, handling milk and growing crops. Moreover, it is developing amazing facilities for the speedy distribution and marketing of farm products as well as sponsoring co-operatives in the business of food storage and food processing.

All this is of particular help to the small farmer, who heretofore was not able to move his truck even to the outskirts of a big commercial market. Still more farmers must join the production parade if we are to meet the ambitious quotas set forth for us in the war program.

To get these all important small-fry to join up and produce the butter for the men behind the guns, FSA has arranged to make life comfortable for small farmers. Gone are the days when the mortgagee could haul off a farmer's daughter in lieu of payment of the debt. There are now "debt-adjustment committees," 2,900 of them in the U. S. These committees, set up by FSA, are the go-betweens between farmer and creditor, act as buffers and help make satisfactory arrangement for both parties. These committees also protect tenant farmers from being bilked of their rightful share of the output of the land they work.

When mortgage or lease worries threaten to impair a farmer's production, these FSA committees go to work and see that the farmer is not unduly harassed.

In some instances, FSA has sponsored small co-operatives which enable small farmers to get together and buy equipment which they otherwise could not afford.

Moreover, FSA tries to keep its debtors healthy, realizing that the worst risk is a dead risk. Through educational campaigns, FSA impresses upon farmers the necessity of balanced diets and sanitary living conditions.

Today, farmers under the wing of FSA are not hungry farmers. They have home gardens, raise vegetables and fruits for their own consumption. Through its sanitation program, FSA has helped 60,000 borrowers to build sanitary privies. Thirty-five thousand borrowers have been able to screen their homes against disease-carrying flies and mosquitoes; 30,000 families enjoy water supplies free from any possibility of contamination. The FSA group medical care program takes account of 100,000 families.

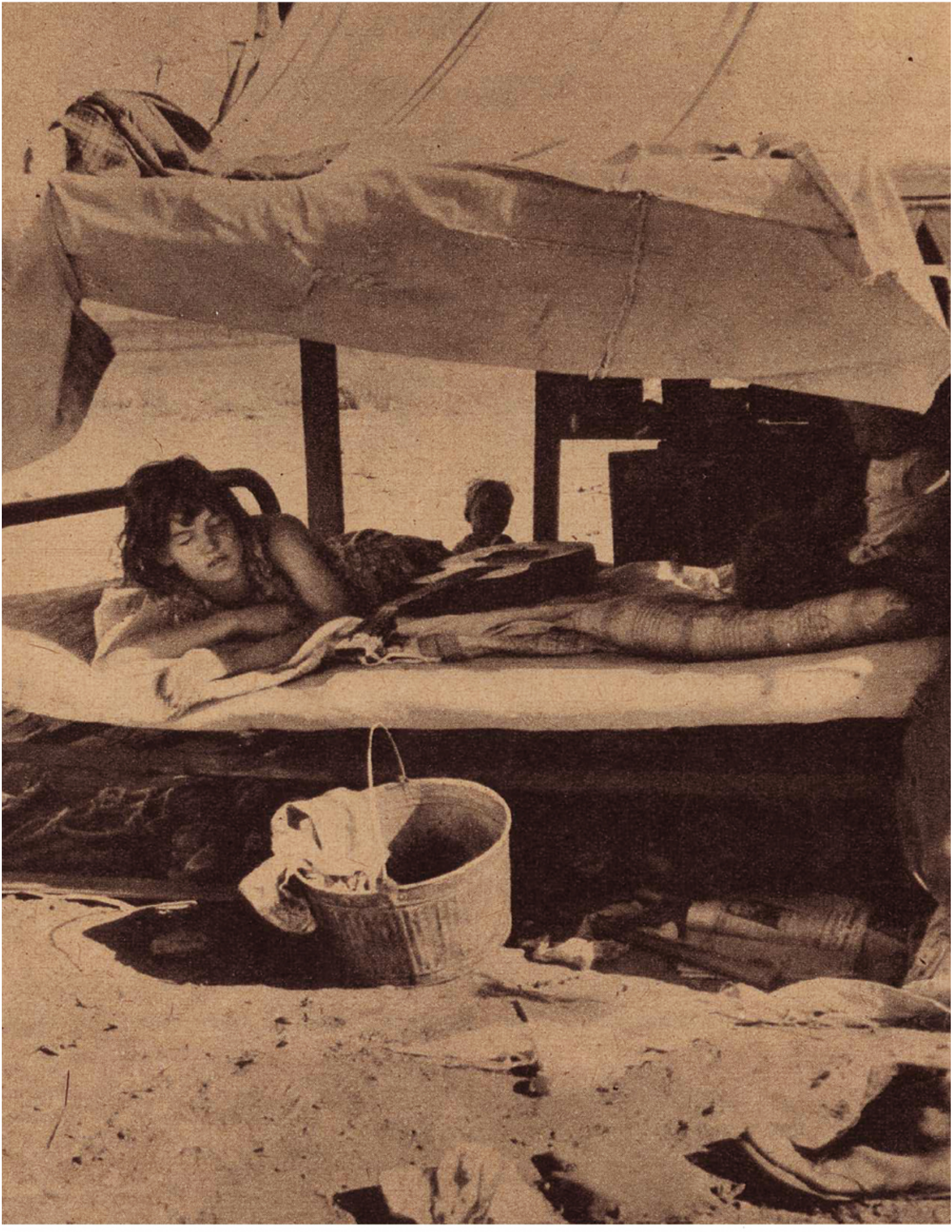
FSA is the symbol of Mr. Roosevelt's determination to win the war without giving up all the things for which we are fighting. If Mr. Roosevelt has his way, the

war's aftermath will be the gentlest post-war period the nation has ever experienced.

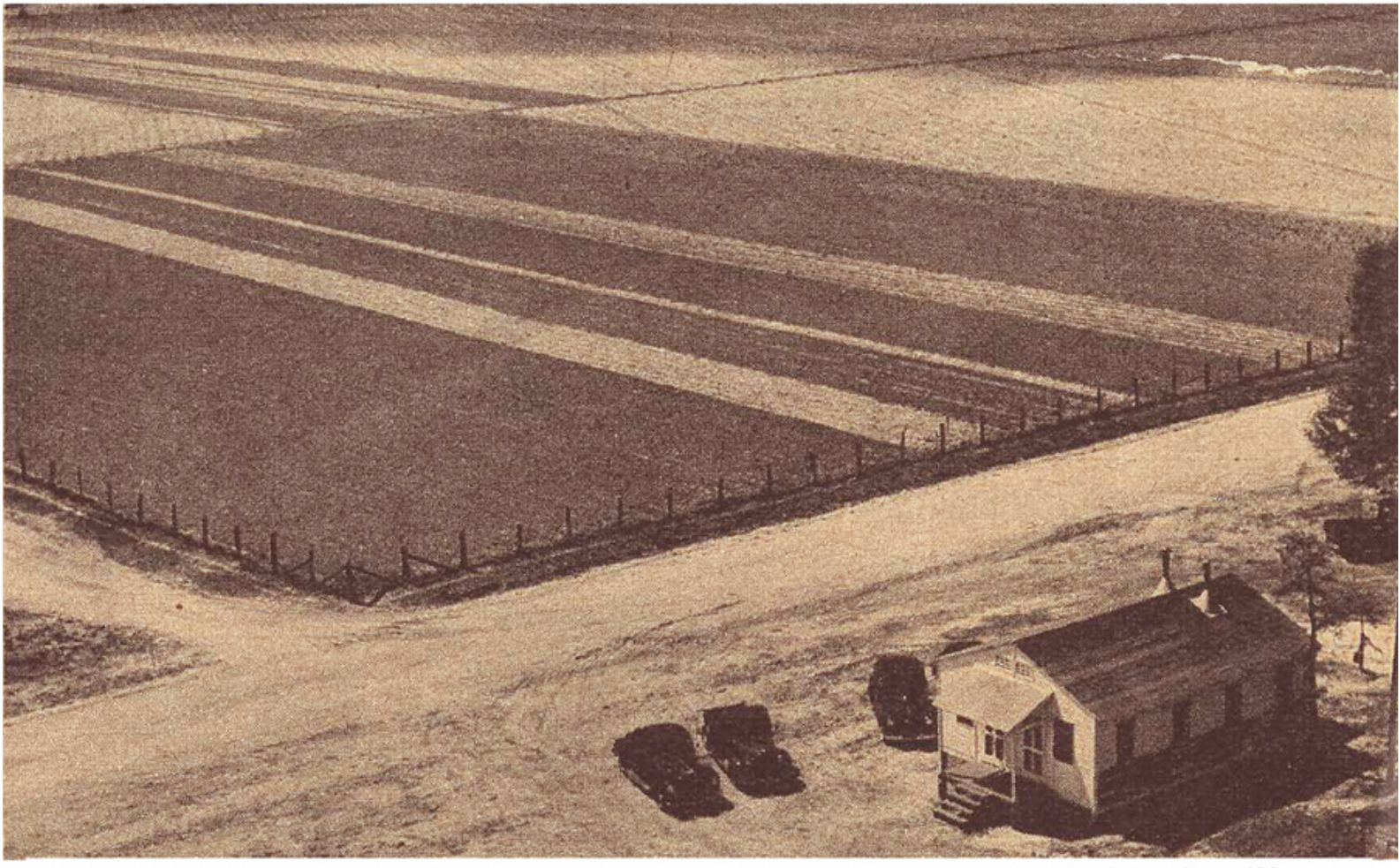
F. D. R. has not forgotten the first war he promised to win—the war against poverty. To win the second war and to lose the first would, he believes, be a shaky victory indeed.



THREE DROUGHT REFUGEE FAMILIES, stalled on a highway in New Mexico in June, 1938. This scene was commonplace all the while that Oakies were marching westward.



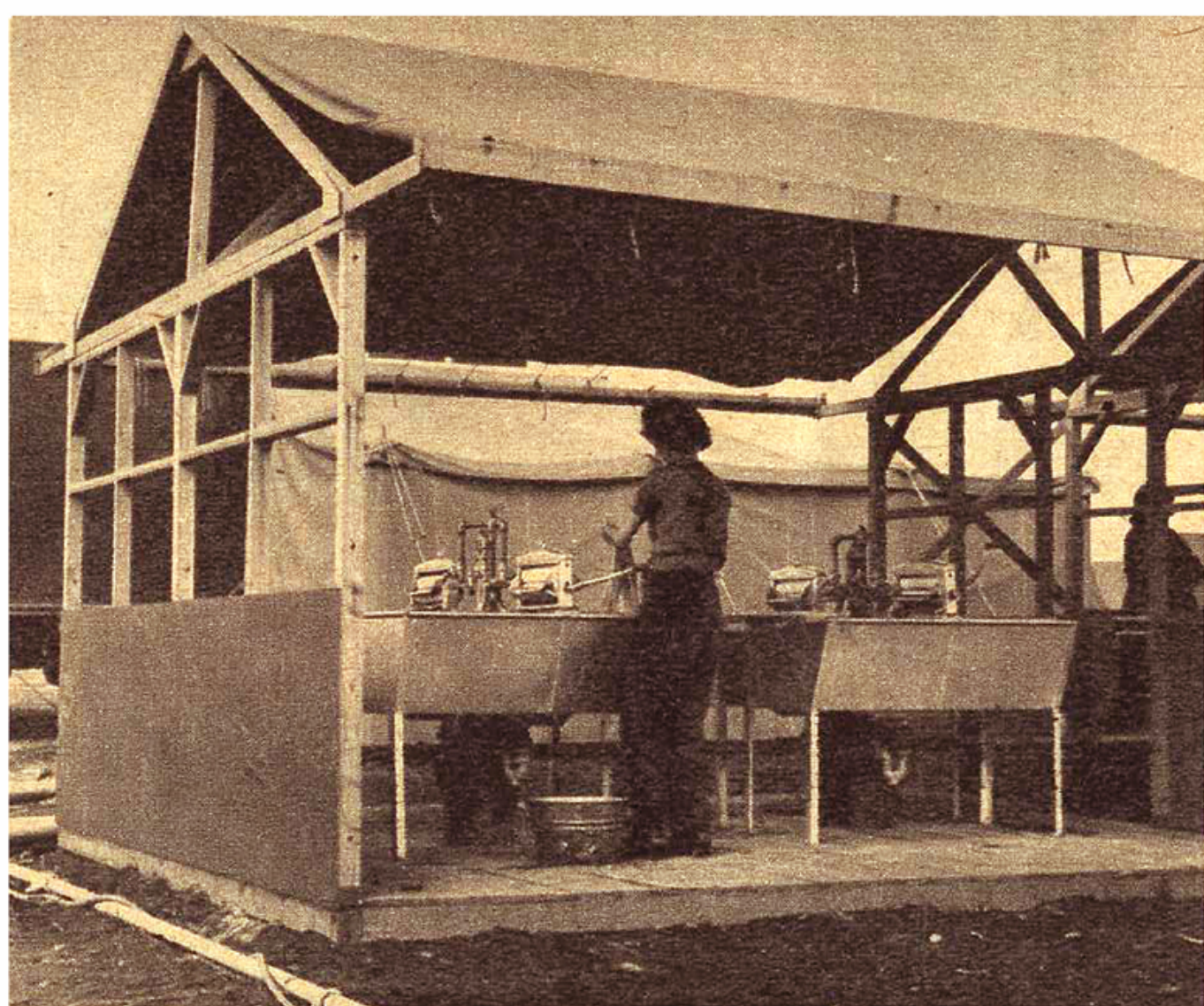
WHERE SKIES ARE NOT CLOUDY ALL DAY. An Oklahoma potato picker's family spent the summer of 1935 in this inadequate tent on the flats near Shafter, Cal. Basic shelter in the new FSA mobile camps will consist of 150 army tents with sidewalls or platforms.



OFFICE AND GARDEN PLOTS at Hazlehurst Farms, Ga., give families a chance to regain health and confidence. Under auspices of the Farm Security Administration, project provides a two-acre garden for each family.

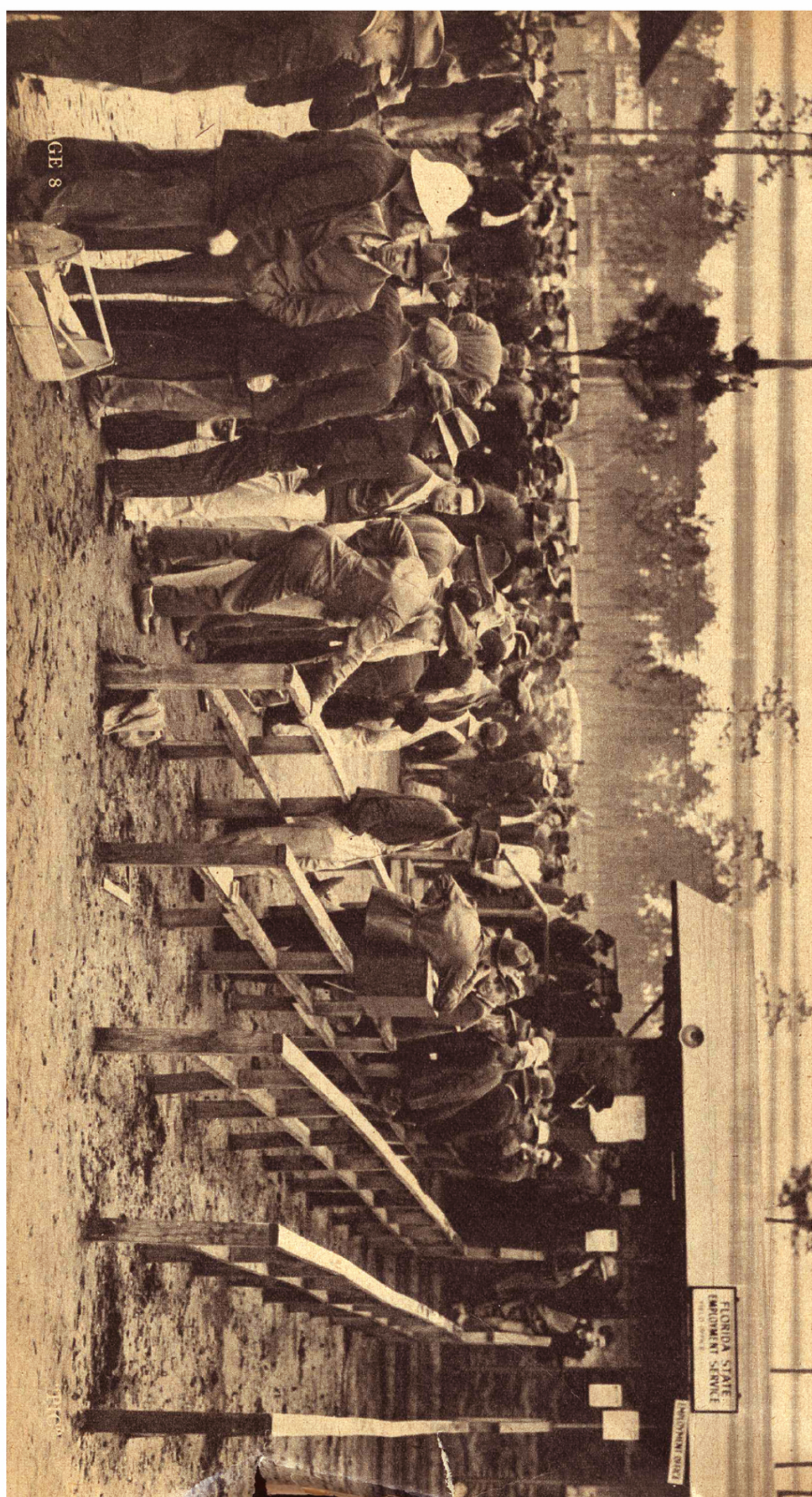


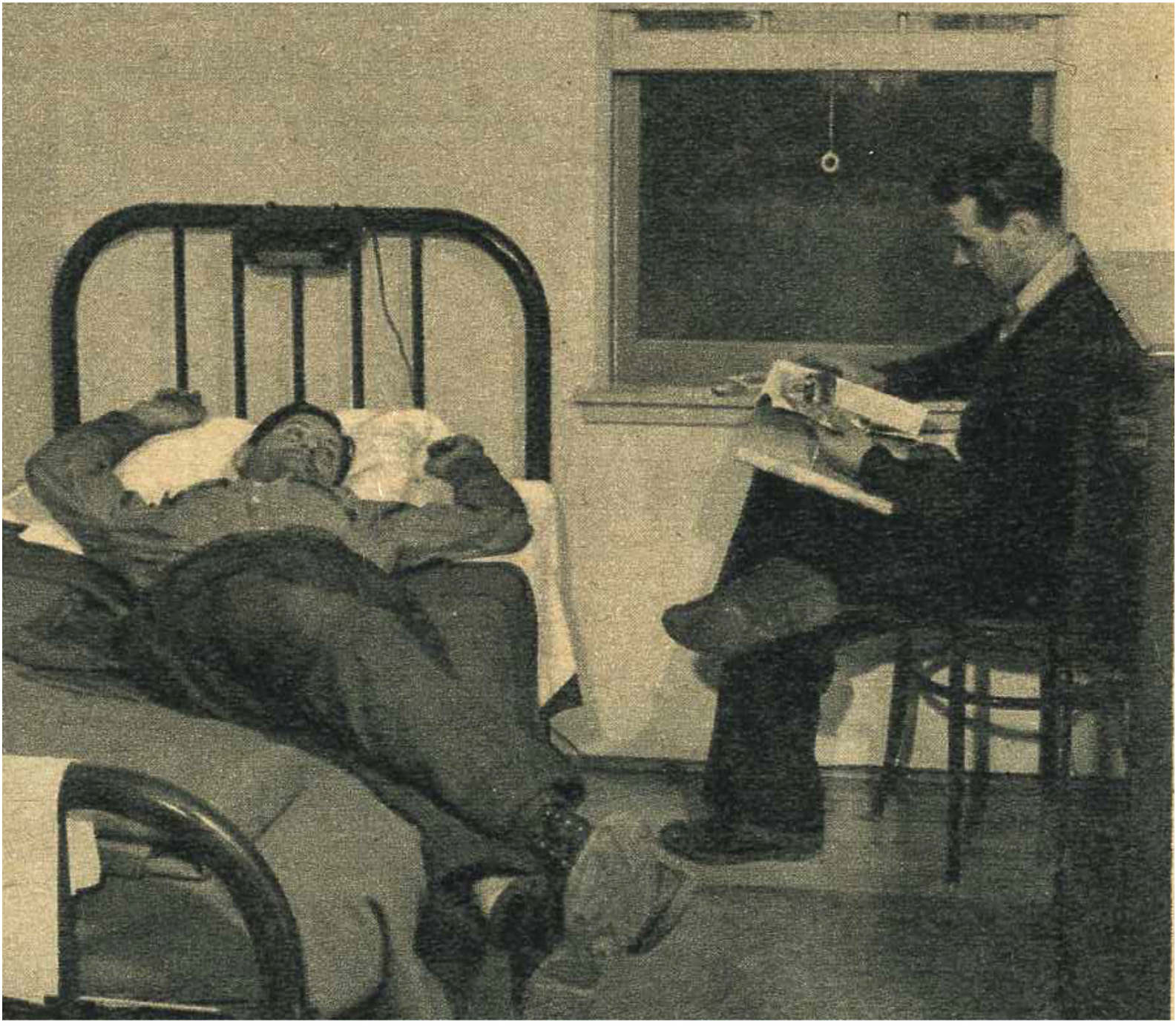
SLEEPING IN THE DEPOT was not uncommon for workers who came to Radford, Va., looking for work in the powder plant in late 1940. As a rule, railroads necessarily ban this practice.



LAUNDRY UNIT of an FSA mobile camp in Merrill County, Ore., shows how "specialization" setup can operate. Camps can be moved from one site to another on trucks.

CONSTRUCTION WORKERS—LIKE THESE AT THE CAMP BLANDING, FLA., EMPLOYMENT OFFICE—WERE QUICKLY SHIFTED BY THE DEFENSE PROGRAM.





NEW DORMITORIES for Groton, Conn., electric boat company workers provide men with the same facilities they would have at home. This is another FSA project.



IN THE KITCHEN of her new home at La Forge Project, Mo., a housewife feels that life in rural U. S. isn't so bad after all.

RIC
RIC

M a r c h 1 7 , 1 9 4 2
p . 5

OldMagazineArticles.com