

T H E W O R K S P R O G R A M--- Works Progress Administration ---

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Hopkins emphasizes rural phase of Works Progress Administration projects.

The drive to employ the country's able workers on government jobs and to direct them into available private employment will not miss the country areas and small towns, Harry L. Hopkins, Works Progress Administrator, said today.

That there is urgent necessity to care for the Nation's rural and small town unemployed is shown by the fact that approximately 40 percent of the 5,000,000 families on relief are to be found in the open country and towns under 5,000 in population, Mr. Hopkins said.

"The city used to be a giant magnet drawing unemployed labor from the country," Mr. Hopkins pointed out. "This is no longer true. For a while, after the beginning of the depression, the flow was reversed, going from city to country. Now even this movement has slowed down. Unemployed needy people are in both city and country."

"Work is largely the answer for both areas," he said.

This is borne out by the fact that, contrary to the general belief, a majority of the families on relief in the open country are those whose economic heads, whether men or women, are not farm operators. They comprise a group of workers who maintained themselves in the past by working at a great variety of trades and jobs.

"It is plain that the country and small town problem is not predominantly a farm-operator problem but essentially one of finding work for non agricultural workers, just as it is in the city," Mr. Hopkins declared.

"Plans are being made under the \$4,000,000,000 Works Program to take care of the rural unemployed who were on relief rolls as of May, 1935," he continued. "One of the main features of this program will be an extensive secondary road-building program. A substantial sum will be spent by the Works Progress Administration for this purpose."

About two-thirds of the roads in the United States are not State highways subject to Federal funds. It is these roads which will come under the Works Progress Administration.

In addition to the secondary road program, other measures designed to alleviate the unemployment problem in the rural areas include the following:

Construction projects of various kinds, such as small dams, levee building, rebuilding streets, waterworks and sewage disposal, extension of lighting systems, community sanitation projects, recreational projects, stream pollution control, and sanitary surveys. The Resettlement Administration will also have a program for rural areas to aid farm families.

Mr. Hopkins pointed out that attempts were being made to provide employment for as many types of skills as possible.

"We have found that to meet the employment needs of the rural relief population," Mr. Hopkins said, "the Works Program must provide for a wide range of occupational skills. That is, we must as nearly as possible put people to doing the work they have been used to. This is important to keep human talent and abilities from deteriorating.

"When they get opportunities to resume private employment we don't want them demoralized from the dole. Our people don't want a hand-out, but something to help them hold their heads up. This is what the Works Program is attempting to do."

Figures from the research studies of the Works Progress Administration show that there are nearly 2,100,000 rural and small town households receiving relief. Of this number, a total of 1,500,000 families, or 71 percent, were families with other than farm operator heads. This number includes farm laborer families.

About 600,000 households, or 29 percent of the total, were families whose heads were classed as farm operators. Of this number, about 48 percent were tenant families, 38 percent were farm owners, and 14 percent were families of farm croppers living in the southern states.

The great majority of the 1,500,000 non farmer heads of rural and town households on relief are unskilled laborers. One-third of them are unskilled industrial laborers, while more than 350,000 are farm laborers. Another 350,000 are skilled and semi-skilled industrial workers. "White collar" workers, including professional, proprietary, and clerical workers, include 100,000 heads. There are 60,000 servants in the group.

The above figures were based on proportions revealed in 138 sample counties selected as representative of the nine major agricultural areas. These counties contained eight percent of all rural and town families in the general population of the areas they represented. The areas, in turn, contained 54 percent of all such families in the United States as a whole.

The States included in the study were Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

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