THE WORKS PROGRAM

---Works Progress Administration---

First Federal Safety Program To Be Launched by Works Progress Administration.

For the first time in the history of the nation a country-wide safety program has the backing of the Federal Government, a fact which should materially aid reducing the nation's giant accident bill, Harry L. Hopkins, Works Progress Administrator, said today.

In a recent executive order, President Roosevelt declared that "All work projects shall be conducted in accordance with safe working conditions, and every effort shall be made for the prevention of accidents."

Because of the determination of the WPA Safety Division that WPA jobs shall be safe jobs, safety principles learned by hundreds of thousands under the work program will be passed on to others and should prove of incalculable good, Mr. Hopkins declared.

Last year the Nation's accident bill amounted to $3,500,000,000 or almost the cost of the entire Works Program. This resulted from 101,000 deaths, 370,000 permanent injuries, and 9,821,000 disabling injuries.

"One of the tangible results already to be noted from an increasing awareness of safe working principles," Mr. Hopkins pointed out, "is the growing number of cities which have initiated public safety campaigns, Councils of Public Safety, town accident patrols and other such measures."

"With this Safety mandate from the President," he said, "we are going to see that our workers are protected. We know we have a grave responsibility. People are eager to work. They will be apt to take chances to do a good job. But we have moral responsibility to the worker, to his family and to the community, to see that each worker is placed safely and works safely throughout the entire program."

The task of the WPA's Safety Division, which is under the supervision of Hob Baker, Assistant Works Progress Administrator, is to "go the extra mile" prevent accidents to WPA workers who will be doing all kinds of jobs from sewing old clothes to repairing "sky-scraper" courthouses who must be protected from sorts of injuries, from frost bites to drownings, and heat exhaustion to truck lisions.
Among the duties of the Safety Division will be to review all project plans or safety suggestions, inspect projects for safety, insist upon qualified first-aid attendants on each project, as well as standard first aid kits, conduct safety courses for foremen and workers, certify trucks for safety, see that workers are used properly on the jobs, using tools properly inspected and reconditioned, prevent water pollution and fire hazards.

Frequent bulletins from the Washington office and state offices will go out to jobs carrying advice on excavations, job supervision, explosives, demolition, safety, railroad crossings, eye protection, cave-ins, health, garbage disposal, gas banks, heat exhaustion, exposure, and other safety subjects.

While the automobile took more than a third of the accidents last year, non-occupational accidents accounted for 25 percent, equaling home accidents but surpassing public accidents which accounted for 17 percent, Mr. Wheary pointed out.

It is mainly the occupational accident the WPA safety men must guard against, according to W. O. Wheary, Director of the Safety Division, "although every type of accident may be looked for under the Works Program, with almost every kind of job on land, water and in the air represented."

Mr. Wheary pointed out that in December, 1933, $25,000,000 was impounded with the United States Employees Compensation Commission to compensate for all legitimate losses due to accidents under the CWA. This was based upon a 3-months period. The Commission, he said, has expressed belief that all losses will not exceed $7,500,000, thus conserving $17,500,000.

This means that under the CWA 3,448,276 hours, or 431,035 eight-hour days, were worked before anyone was killed. Under the FERA safety was increased to a point where 7,692,308 hours, or 951,539 eight-hour days, were worked without a fatality.

"When CWA was started we were given an estimated frequency rate of 100 lost-time injuries per million hours worked," Mr. Wheary said. "After the safety Program got under way the statisticians reduced their estimate to 80. As a result of the safety program, our accident frequency rate was only 41. A loss-time injury is one serious enough to prevent the worker from returning to work the day after that on which he was hurt. The entire cost of the safety program was under $2,000,000."

"Based on our experience under CWA, when we operated without the power of a Federal Executive Order, we believe that the contribution of the Federal Government's safety program under WPA will bring the national frequency ratio further down," Mr. Wheary said. "We had under CWA, 2,000,000 workers who never knew before what safety meant. Under this program, through the cooperation of the American Red Cross, The United States Bureau of mines and other organizations, some 50,000 people were qualified as first-aid attendants. A large percentage of
aid work was done in areas where the nearest doctor was 25 miles away.

will mean to these communities and to industry generally when these

return to private work is obvious."

From 1926 to 1934, Mr. Wheary said that concerns sending reports to the

Safety Council experienced an overall reduction of 57 percent in their

rate (the number of disabling injuries per million hours worked) and a

crease of 37 percent in their severity rate, or days lost per 1,000 hours worked.

Mr. Wheary stressed the fact that every project under Works Progress

administration must be scrutinized by safety experts in the State or district be-

te it is authorized.

"Back of all other aims is the determination, which has grown through

1 and ERA, with increasing appreciation of the social purposes of our program,"

Wheary said, "to do everything possible to prevent accidents.

Our liability in case of accident will have no bearing whatever on

responsibility for taking every precaution to protect people from injury.

shall consider these workers 'our people' the moment they are assigned to a

project, and shall do everything in our power to help them remain alive and

sound health to carry their own responsibilities to their families and their

munities. Our purpose is not to avoid blame for injuries but to prevent

idents."

An adequate safety organization approved by the Safety Division of

WPA at Washington will be maintained in each State WPA office. It will

ist of a full-time, experienced, and efficient State Safety Consultant;

perienced State Safety Representatives proportionate to the number of persons

king, the number and type of projects, and the geography of the State; and

ibly District Safety Inspectors.

These men will report functionally to the State Safety Representatives.

State Safety Consultant, under supervision of the State Works Progress Ad-

istrator, will be responsible for the conduct of the safety program in the

ite.

Large projects, where the hazards warrant full-time safety attention,

maintain experienced and qualified Job Safety Inspectors, approved by the

Safety Consultant of State Safety Representative designated by him. The

Safety Inspector will cooperate with the engineer in charge of the project.
The State Safety Consultant will be notified in advance of all buildings occupied by the Works Progress Administration and of all projects to be placed in operation. All project plans will be promptly reviewed for safety questions by the State Safety Representatives where possible, and by the State Safety Consultant for all projects initiated at State headquarters.

Inspection for fire, accident, and health hazards will be made at least monthly by the State Safety Consultant or by inspectors under his jurisdiction of camps, shelters, hospitals, canning, mattress and similar projects, rooms of all types, surplus commodity warehouses, and all buildings of the Works Progress Administration.

The State Safety Consultant will arrange for necessary courses in first aid. Services of a person certified as competent to administer first aid will be available for all workers. Standard first aid kits will be maintained on every job.

Where a full-time Job Safety Inspector is maintained on a large project, functions will be purely advisory, except in case of an emergency (construed as a condition which, if allowed to continue, would be dangerous to life or either of the public or of project employees) when, in the absence of the job supervisor or superintendent or upon the latter's refusal to follow recommendations, he is required to stop the project until it is made safe.

In order to visualize the type of work the Safety Division will do, experience under the CWA may be briefly summarized. In this program 4,000,000 men were mobilized for employment in a variety of occupations not found in any single industrial enterprise.

Working with the National Safety Council, the CWA had a safety organization in every State within three weeks after the program started. Thereafter, the death rate on CWA projects was 40 percent lower than before accident prevention got under way.

The presence of mind and training of many work relief officials, foremen, safety inspectors and workers saved many lives under that program.
On one job in a Southern State a safety inspector found a number of workers laboring in an unsafe excavation. He requested the foremen to the men to another location until the banks could be properly shored. This out 3 o'clock. About two hours after the men had been removed the inspector ed to further study the situation and found that during his absence some tons of dirt had caved in.

In the state of Maine, the mayor of a town saved one or more lives when he insisted that a foreman and crew leave a trench into which was being lowered 1,300-pound sections of 24-inch concrete pipe, despite the foreman's assurance the yoke and gear were perfectly safe. A day later the yoke broke, letting the 1,300-pound pipe fall. Had the crew been in the trench all would have been crushed.

Safety Director Wheary has stressed the fact that accidents resulting from disobedience of safety instruction represent failure in the safety education of foremen and supervisors. He emphasizes the policy that those directly in charge of production on the project must be taught that safety of workers comes ahead of production. They must not only give safety instruction but must see that the instructions are carried out.

For instance, one foreman instructed a man to get down from the load of logs and ride in the cab. Then he walked away. The truck driver urged the worker to come into the cab, but the man did not move. Later the man on the load was killed. In another incident, the foreman left the job but designated someone in charge during his absence. The substitute instructed one of the men to get in the clear. The man remained where he was. As the tree which was being cut down fell, it struck and killed the man.

Fire drills and training of safety crews on jobs have resulted in the saving of many lives. Reports from two Southern states compliment the training of fire crews in putting out a mattress factory fire before arrival of the local fire department and praise the drilling of transients, day and night, in preparation for fires.

That all of the accidents fortunately are not fatal and may sometimes even afford amusement is seen in the report of one safety inspector in North Dakota.

A worker was digging in a gravel pit at the bottom of a slight hill. Bashed by a dog, a rabbit came over the top of the hill with such speed it dived over the edge of the pit, striking the worker in the neck and knocking him down. Both were stunned. The worker suffered a stiff neck for a few days.