

THE WORKS PROGRAM

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--- Works Progress Administration ---

For immediate release
Wednesday, January 15, 1936.

WPA officials shocked by death of W. R. Dyess and Robert H. McNair: To attend funeral.

Works Progress Administration officials in Washington headquarters were shocked today by news of the death of W. R. Dyess, Arkansas Works Progress Administrator, and Robert H. McNair, Director of the Division of Finance and Reports, Arkansas WPA.

Harry L. Hopkins, Works Progress Administrator and Federal Emergency Relief Administrator, and Lawrence Westbrook, Assistant Works Progress Administrator, will leave Washington this afternoon to attend the funeral of Mr. Dyess which will be held at 2:30 P.M., Friday, at Osceola, Arkansas, his home.

Mr. Dyess and Mr. McNair had spent several days here conferring with officials on administrative matters.

Mr. Hopkins said of Mr. Dyess:

"He was a fine man. The unemployed and the entire State of Arkansas have lost a friend, for Mr. Dyess worked prodigiously in behalf of their welfare. He was intelligent and courageous.

"His contribution to the work of FERA, CWA, and WPA consisted, not only of his efficiently applied energy, but in his vision and deep understanding of the needs of his State.

"He talked with us here yesterday and on several days before, and it is appalling that he has gone while in the full stride of his splendid work.

"We relied on his judgment in our work together, and the friendship that grew between us from the early days of FERA in 1933 makes his passing a great personal loss to me."

- 2 -

Mr. Dyess was State emergency relief administrator in Arkansas under the FERA from the beginning. Later, he was CWA administrator, and more recently he was appointed Works Progress administrator for the State, which office he held jointly with that of State relief administrator at the time of his death.

An outstanding accomplishment, planned and executed by Mr. Dyess, an organized rural-industrial community in Mississippi County, Arkansas, stands as a memorial to his organizing and administrative ability. It was developed under the FERA's rural rehabilitation program to enable needy farm families to gain self-support, and is regarded as one of the best handled of the numerous projects in this field. It will be known as the Dyess Colony in memory of its founder.

He had conferred with Mr. Hopkins and Assistant WPA Administrators Aubrey W. Williams, Lawrence Westbrook, and Jacob Baker.

Mr. McNair had conferred here with numerous WPA officials on administrative procedure. He was State emergency relief and CWA auditor before appointment in June, 1935, to the WPA position he held at the time of his death.

In paying tribute to Mr. McNair, Mr. Hopkins said:

"He was exceptionally able and by all of us he was held in high regard. We called on Mr. McNair frequently to give the Washington office the benefit of his sound judgment and ability.

"His death leaves an official and personal void on the staff."

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