For immediate release
Friday, January 31, 1936.

Hopkins warns against shirking on WPA projects; sets penalties.

Harry L. Hopkins, Works Progress Administrator, today warned against shirking on Works Progress Administration projects and set suspension without pay or permanent discharge as alternative penalties.

A small proportion of the workers, Mr. Hopkins said, have hampered efficient operation of projects. The warning, he pointed out, was aimed not at any general attitude or action infusing WPA, but at the few workers who haven't shown the right attitude.

Foremen and supervisors who tolerate loafing or misconduct on the job will be held to account under the same penalties, Mr. Hopkins emphasized.

In an order sent to all State Works Progress Administrators, Mr. Hopkins said:

"It is the policy of the Works Progress Administration that projects shall be operated with the maximum degree of efficiency that is compatible with carrying out the primary purpose of the works program, which is to transfer people from the relief rolls to useful work. In the great majority of cases, workers to whom employment has been given have shown that they desire to render conscientious service.

"Reports have been received, however, that in certain instances a small proportion of workers have detracted from the efficiency of operation of projects by their unwillingness to deliver a fair day's work coupled with a belief that their employment would be continued regardless of their attitude. Workers employed on Works Progress Administration projects are expected to render as conscientious service to that Administration as they would to a regular Government Department or a private employer. Habitual and intentional shirking will not be tolerated."
In cases of demonstrated shirking or misconduct, employees may be suspended without pay for periods not exceeding one month, or may be discharged. Since foremen and supervisors are responsible that conscientious service is rendered by all employees under their jurisdiction, those who habitually permit shirking by workers who are under their direction may be similarly suspended or discharged. Employees discharged for these reasons will not again be employed by the Works Progress Administration, either on the same or another project, nor will they be certified for employment to any other Government agency which is participating in the works program unless they can show that the discharge was not warranted.

"State Administrators are responsible that the contents of this letter are brought to the attention of all employees and that its provisions are enforced."