

T H E W O R K S P R O G R A M

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-- Works Progress Administration --

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Hopkins says scientific projects of WPA add to world's store of knowledge.

Valuable additions to the world's store of knowledge in medicine, chemistry, archeology, and other branches of science, have been made in recent months by the several hundred WPA workers engaged on scientific projects throughout the country, Harry L. Hopkins, Works Progress Administrator, said today.

Discoveries of definite value have already been made in several instances, Mr. Hopkins added, while in others, the WPA has enabled regular research groups to advance their work greatly beyond anticipated schedules.

The recent discovery of a 20,000,000-ton deposit of sodium sulphate, or Glauber's salt, in North Dakota by WPA workers engaged on a survey of natural resources was pointed to by Mr. Hopkins as one of the outstanding achievements accredited to the program. The value of the "find" has been impartially estimated at \$350,000,000.

"Such spectacular feats as this, of course," the Administrator said, "do not reward the searches of even the greatest scientists except at rare intervals. Hence, we shall not be disappointed if other of our groups fail to make the headlines with similar startling discoveries.

"In dozens of laboratories and experimental stations, however, our people on security wages are plodding along shoulder to shoulder with Ph. D's. and experts in the endless pursuit of scientific knowledge. We are being roundly criticized in some quarters by people who apparently do not appreciate the values of research, but Pasteur, Edison and Bell and a few others like that were also laughed at until they came up with the answer to some of the world's most perplexing problems.

"That North Dakota project was just a \$28,000 'boondoggle' until the sulphate deposit was discovered. Since then, the critics have been strangely silent.

"If any defense is needed for those of our people working on scientific projects, it is that each and every one of those projects is sponsored and backed by responsible scientific groups. Universities, boards of health, museums, founda-

tions, and industrial and independent research organizations have asked for and are cooperating in every scientific undertaking the WPA has launched.

"Whether the layman is able to see it or not, this work is making a material contribution to the life and culture of America."

In the majority of cases, Mr. Hopkins said, the contribution of the WPA has been in the furnishing of additional personnel for the carrying on of work already planned or undertaken by established groups. Typical of this class of projects are the studies in plant diseases, pest eradication, communicable diseases, natural resource surveys, and other similar undertakings requiring considerable manpower.

In other cases, trained research and scientific workers in certain fields have been taken from relief rolls and placed at work in which their talents can be profitably utilized. Hundreds of laboratory workers, nurses, technicians, catalogers, and experienced field men have been thus employed at the work with which they are most familiar.

The scientific projects now being aided or prosecuted wholly with WPA funds are widely diversified.

In New York City the reports and case histories of all the mental cases treated at the mental hygiene clinics are being studied with a view to establishing a control over the most dreaded of hereditary diseases -- mental illness.

The Michigan Department of Public Health has been aided in a study of whooping cough by the assignment of WPA workers to its staff. The work has been carried on at Grand Rapids under the direction of Dr. Pearl Kendrick, associate director of the Bureau of Laboratories, and the results already achieved are of measurable value; a means whereby whooping cough may be recognized more quickly than formerly, and a possible method of immunization.

This study was begun under the FERA. When the shift to WPA came last summer, the project was temporarily threatened with suspension. The workers, however, were so absorbed in their tasks that they continued at them without pay until an adjustment to the new program was made.

The Committee on Research of the Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute has sponsored fourteen projects for studies in the fields of aeronautics, chemistry, and mechanical and electrical engineering.

The Port of New York Authority has secured WPA funds for a series of studies in visibility forecasting, the results of which may be the means of saving countless lives and property loss in air and water transportation. New York University is sponsoring researches in the field of preventive dentistry and cancer treatment.