I. Hopkins Keeps Advised on WPA Flood Relief Activities.

Reports continued to pour in upon Works Progress Administrator Harry L. Hopkins today advising him of the activities of WPA emergency work crews throughout the thirteen flood-stricken states.

More than 250,000 men and women from WPA projects—100,000 of them estimated to be in Pennsylvania alone—were reported fighting the waters, rescuing stranded families, and "mopping up" in the wake of rivers and streams that had begun to return to their beds.

Flood crests had passed throughout western New York and Pennsylvania, but many sections of New England and cities along the lower Ohio River were still menaced by rising waters and maximum levels are not anticipated until Sunday and Monday.

Meanwhile, liaison was being established with Pennsylvania, New York, and Connecticut communities which have been isolated with all communications cut off for the last three days. From each came harrowing accounts of human suffering and destruction of private and public property. WPA workers, cooperating with local officials and welfare groups, had pressed their labors without benefit of news or instructions from outside sources, the reports stated.

Mr. Hopkins received the following report from State Works Progress administrator Edward N. Jones of Pennsylvania:
More than 100,000 WPA workers are engaged in flood relief in the 16 counties suffering from the disaster. Among the workers are 6,000 women, including 300 trained nurses who are cooperating with the State Health Department caring for injured and taking health protective measures. The other women are operating emergency kitchens and preparing and distributing clothing and food supplies.

Throughout the affected areas WPA workers were busy night and day evacuating residents and assisting local officials. In northwestern Pennsylvania, swept by heavy snowstorms while the rivers in central and southwestern Pennsylvania were rising to an all-time record. WPA workers kept the highways open so that aid could be rushed to the flood zones.

District No. 12 had 3,000 men on the job throughout Wednesday night and Thursday morning clearing an 18-inch snowfall from the roads. National Guardsmen were transported to the Johnstown flood scene in five WPA busses.

Nearly 5,000 men, meanwhile, were at work in District 14 clearing the highways. Practically every road in Mercer County was closed because of a snowfall that drifted in places to fifteen and eighteen feet. Lawrence and Butler Counties were less severely hit but scores of towns and hundreds of farms were isolated until the WPA men opened up the roads.

When the floods broke Wednesday, every facility of the WPA was placed at the disposal of local and state officials in the emergency. District No. 11 moved headquarters from Somerset to Johnstown and ordered 6,000 men from Somerset and Cambria Counties into the stricken city. They assisted in rescue work and after the flood waters subsided started to clear debris from the streets. Downtown Johnstown is under four to five feet of mud.

Tomorrow morning 4,000 WPA workers will start digging out, working on a Fourth Ward section that has been blocked off by city officials. When this section is completed, the workers will be moved to another section and proceed in this fashion until the job is completed. City officials were forced to adopt the blocking-off plan so that sightseers and refugees would not interfere with the work.

When the flood waters descended on Pittsburgh, 25,000 WPA workers were ordered to stand by for action. They assisted in patrol duty during the height of the flood and when the water began to recede they started the job of cleaning up.

The director of District No. 13 rushed 5,000 workers, including a score or more of nurses, to Vandergrift on the Kissimmee River, where flood waters Wednesday washed away between 50 and 100 homes.

WPA workers who were repairing the damage done by last week's flood in Wilkes Barre were summoned to fight the new danger.
as flood warnings again were given Wednesday. The director threw 1,600 men on the partially finished dike along the Susquehanna River at the lower end of the city. They held the dike intact with sandbags until the waters, reaching unprecedented heights, completely covered the operations.

"Two thousand WPA workers assisted in evacuating residents and pumping out hospitals, orphanages, the telephone building, power plants and public buildings. Three thousand were standing by to start the clean-up when the water dropped low enough.

"Williamsport, one of the most severely-hit communities, was out of touch with the rest of the state for more than 48 hours. The director was reached by telephone today. He reported that the WPA offices (District No. 5) in the Park Hotel had been flooded and half of the town was inundated. Scores of homes were washed away on the flood. Four thousand WPA workers are assisting in flood relief in this community.

"Communication with District No. 10 headquarters, at Dubois, also was out for 24 hours. The director reported today that the offices were flooded. Four thousand WPA workers were operating in Clearfield, Clinton and Centre Counties, most seriously affected by the flood in this District.

"Six thousand WPA workers helped in rescue and relief work in District No. 9. Hundreds of families were taken from their homes as the Juniata River swelled over its banks Wednesday night. Throughout the following day the same service was performed in adjoining communities and in Harrisburg further down the Susquehanna. Thirty-five WPA trucks were dispatched to Johnstown late Wednesday night from a project in Indiantown Gap after local and state officials appealed for this type of equipment.

"While it is impossible, due to disrupted communications, to get any accurate figures it is estimated that not less than 1,000 WPA trucks are being used in flood relief work. Throughout the state the WPA is cooperating with the Red Cross and the Governor's Disaster Relief Committee.

"Every facility and the entire personnel of the State WPA were placed at the disposal of the Relief Committee. District directors were notified to extend the fullest cooperation to local and state authorities in the emergency.

"WPA workers in undetermined numbers have been used throughout the flood areas to repair wash-cuts on highways, clear away landslides and remove snow so that communication can be established as quickly as possible.

"The WPA's participation in the work of alleviating flood suffering has won the commendation of the public and of officials in every part of the state. The organization was
fitted to meet such an emergency and in every section it acted with speed and efficiency.

"Several flood control projects developed by WPA have proved their worth, according to meager reports. This is especially true in Schuylkill County, Lackawanna County and York County, where the Codorus Creek project is located."

At the same time, State Works Progress Administrator F. Witcher McCullough of West Virginia, informed Mr. Hopkins of conditions within his State. His report follows:

"Fifteen hundred WPA workers at command of agencies directing flood rescue work in West Virginia, have moved thousands of families from danger, saving an estimated amount of property.

"District directors are under orders to keep workmen mobilized and to cooperate fully with the American Red Cross and other welfare authorities.

"WPA trucks and other equipment have been made available. Truck crews have been on duty day and night evacuating threatened families and rescuing others who were trapped assisting them to find refuge and preserving property.

"It is impossible to get complete picture as communication service is disrupted.

"I have directed that bed clothing, wearing apparel and other commodities manufactured in sewing rooms be made available to sufferers.

"Commodity distribution service is distributing food and supplies in cooperation with the State Relief Administration and the Red Cross.

"In Wheeling area where suffering is most acute, school nutrition project workers are cooking and serving food to refugees.

"Orders have been sent out for WPA community sanitation project workers in counties bordering Ohio Valley to be used in safeguarding and cleaning water supply sources and other necessary sanitation work under direction of State Department of Health to prevent spread of disease. The greatest part of this work is to be done after the flood subsides.

"The Second WPA District has six hundred men operating out of five stations assisting police and Emergency Commission in Wheeling.

"WPA workers have moved one thousand five hundred families
from threatened areas and had made seven hundred emergency rescues of persons trapped in homes.

"Thirty workers on duty at New Martinsville are moving relief commodities from warehouses threatened by water. In Moundsville and other Marshall County towns, two hundred WPA workers were moving families in cooperation with the Soil Conservation Service, which furnished trucks, and 40 CCC camp enrollees. Workers also were on duty in McMechen and Benwood.

"I have been unable to contact Brooke and Hancock Counties where more workers are on duty.

"Fourth District reports 150 men and 12 trucks in Wood and Wirt County areas and 60 men and 3 trucks in Pleasants and Tyler County areas. Majority of these crews worked all night and will continue, but have the situation well in hand without much loss of property and no loss of life.

"Fifth District reports 100 on duty at Point Pleasant, next city below Parkersburg. Workmen also assisting smaller communities along the river. Huntington has 600 men in three shifts under direction of Civic Committee working out of emergency stations. Calls for assistance come to central point and our activities principally of moving families in danger areas and protecting property. We are standing by ready to assist Ceredo and Kenova. No word from Cumberland and Potomac sections in WPA District Number One at Elkins.

"No emergency measures needed in Grant, Hardy, Pendleton, Randolph and Tucker Counties as flood waters subsiding but unable to communicate with other five counties.

"Little work is necessary in the two inland WPA districts, Sixth at Charleston and Third at Lewisburg. Charleston had twenty-four men and four trucks helping to move families."

State Works Progress Administrator Dr. Carl Watson of Ohio, communicated with Mr. Hopkins as follows:

"Four thousand employees of the Works Progress Administration in Ohio speedily mobilized to meet the emergency, have worked effectively this week to save lives, protect property and relief distress in fourteen counties along the flood swollen Ohio River.

"In East Liverpool, Steubenville, Marietta and other communities where the crest of the flood has passed, the WPA men today are directing their energies to rehabilitation work.

"In Pomeroy, Gallipolis, Ironton, Portsmouth and other towns where the river is at or near record height today, WPA employes are battling to hold back the menacing waters, aiding in rescue efforts and providing thousands of refugees with
food, clothing and bedding.

"And further down the river, near Cincinnati, where the danger will be greatest on Sunday and Monday, the WPA forces stand ready to meet the threat with prompt, effective action. In all their work, they are cooperating to the fullest extent with other relief agencies, public and private. Never before, it is believed, has a major flood disaster in Ohio caused so small a toll in human lives and human suffering. For this fact the efforts of WPA and other agencies are held chiefly responsible.

"When word reached Columbus Tuesday night that Pittsburgh was about to experience the greatest flood in its history, State Headquarters of the WPA in Columbus swung into action at once.

"Directors of Districts Three and Four, where the danger would be greatest and most immediate in Columbiana, Jefferson, Belmont and Monroe Counties were instructed to take all necessary steps to prevent loss of life and property. Hundreds of WPA workers were taken from their regular duties on projects and assigned to the emergency work.

"Crews of men were sent along the river to warn families in the threatened area and to help them in moving their household goods to safe places. Practically all residents were out of danger before the crest of the flood arrived. A few were rescued in boats. Other crews placed sandbags to strengthen flood walls along the river.

"At Marietta, where the water reached a depth of more than nine feet in the business section and several residential districts, three WPA crews of 50 to 100 men each, worked in eight-hour shifts during the danger period. Some two hundred families were moved to temporary quarters in schools and other public buildings on high ground. More than one hundred other families, in more substantial homes, were helped to move their furniture to the second or third floors of their houses.

"Meanwhile, employees in the Procurement Department at Columbus headquarters, worked night and day to organize and direct the distribution on food, clothing and other supplies to flood sufferers. Motor trucks from all parts of the State were mobilized and sent into the flood areas with tons of meat, beans and other food, and with thousands of articles of clothing and bedding, including mattresses, comforters, sheets, pillow cases, rubber boots for workers and dresses and night garments for women and children refugees.

"Soup kitchens were established and supplied at Bridgeport, Martins Ferry, Bellaire, Marietta, Pomeroy, Portsmouth and other stricken communities.

"At Bellaire, WPA workers unloaded and put into service five United States Coast Guard cutters which had been shipped by rail from Chicago. With Belmont County, WPA officials acting
as pilots, the Coast Guardsmen in charge of these boats immediately began patrolling the waters on both the Ohio and West Virginia sides of the river.

"Women workers on WPA projects were assigned to the duty of cooking, serving and washing dishes in food kitchens throughout the flood district, and to sorting clothing for distribution among refugees. In a number of towns, WPA operated trucks hauling drinking water from nearby communities where the sources of supply were above the danger of flood water contamination."

In a brief telegraphic report, Harry W. Witters, Works Progress Administrator for Vermont, stated:

"Approximately two thousand men are employed on emergency flood work. The types of work include emergency day and night patrol on flooded highways, emergency protection and repairs to bridges and highways, temporary replacement of roadways, removal of debris and mud from streets for health protection.

"Conditions worse than in 1927 flood were, undoubtedly, prevented by flood control projects at East Barre and Wrightsville constructed by Civilian Conservation Corps."

In a telegraphic report, Field Representative R. C. Branion for the New England States, informed Mr. Hopkins that some fine work was done in Manchester and Concord, New Hampshire, by WPA workers under the direction of WPA District Engineer, Major Roberts.

In Manchester, Mr. Branion explained, local authorities had given up the bridge across the Merrimac River.

"Fortunately", Mr. Branion added, "it was possible due to Major Roberts' special knowledge and the availability of a large number of WPA workers to sandbag the banks of the river to relieve the pressure of the flood waters on a weakening abutment. As the result the bridge is still standing and the danger is apparently passed.

"Although the flood waters are subsiding, it will be another week before the waters have gone down sufficiently to permit of cleaning up and reconstruction work. The WPA workers seem happy over the opportunity to be of such real service to their communities in this time of stress."
"The situation in Concord is as bad as, if not worse than Manchester, but everything possible is being done by the authorities. The labor of WPA workers is being used effectively. Concord has been cut off, both up and down stream, and has been out of communication with the surrounding country.

"In Hartford, Connecticut, the situation seems to be under control and WPA workers are cooperating in moving families from flooded areas. Their chief opportunity for service will come about a week after the flood waters have subsided sufficiently to permit of cleaning up streets, cellars and basements.

"The flood has subsided considerably in Binghampton, New York, and WPA workers are now helping to pump out cellars in order to take the necessary steps to prevent disease.

"In the New England and the New York State flooded areas, the services of WPA workers will be needed on flood clean-up work for probably the next three or four weeks."