

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

--Works Progress Administration--

For release in afternoon newspapers
of Friday, April 17, 1936

Hopkins Expects Research Program To Yield Valuable Data on Unemployment Causes.

The intensive study of the fundamental causes of unemployment now being made by the Works Progress Administration, is expected by Administrator Harry L. Hopkins to provide an accurate guide for the formulation of permanent policies of relief and security for the Nation's unemployed.

The study, scientifically attacking the problem of unemployment and dependence along both economic and sociological fronts, with particular emphasis on the effects of technological advances in industry, is wider in scope and more detailed than any other similar research.

Set up as the National Research Program, the study is under the general supervision of Corrington Gill, assistant administrator.

"We have had our hands so full," Mr. Hopkins said, "relieving the immediate distress attendant upon unemployment that we have not been able to give as much thought as we would have liked to the conditions which brought the situation about.

"Recognizing that unemployment is a problem which is likely to remain for some years to come, we are turning our attention now to an examination of its underlying causes. Once we have diagnosed the trouble we will be in a better position to work out a permanent cure."

One of the most significant phases of the study, Mr. Hopkins pointed out, is that on reemployment opportunities and recent changes in industrial techniques.

This unit, cooperating with representatives of major industrial groups such as mining, steel, automobiles, lumber and leather goods, will seek to discover the actual effects of the introduction of labor-saving machinery in manufacture and commerce. Not only will it consider the number of workers

displaced by these innovations, but also the extent to which these workers have been reabsorbed within the same industries because of increased production, or in other industries.

At the same time, an effort will be made to gauge employment capacity of various industrial groups at different production levels. From this a determination may be possible of future unemployment trends; in what trades and occupations unemployment is most likely to occur; the possibilities of reemployment in other fields; and whether or not there is likely to be a residual group of more or less permanently unemployed people.

"I am not impressed by arguments that labor-saving machinery is a sort of Frankenstein to which all our unemployment ills may be attributed," Mr. Hopkins asserted. "There are a number of other factors in the picture as well, and to say that inventiveness should be checked or penalized would be to stay the march of progress.

"It is undeniable, however, that mechanization has brought about a vast change in our whole social and economic condition in the last quarter of a century. I think it is essential that we discover to what extent this change has affected us and how we may best adapt our mode of living to it. That is one of the main purposes of this study insofar as unemployment is concerned. We want to find out what effect this has had on the ratio of jobs to workers and to learn how we may bring them into closer relation."

Other phases of the National Research Program will be concerned with the social and economic consequences of the various forms of Federal benefits on the national economy; a study of the occupational characteristics of the people on relief; the effect of relief benefits on wage levels in private employment; a study of the debt structure in the United States; a digest of state public welfare provisions and a series of studies in changes in the relief population.

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