THE WORKS PROGRAM

--Works Progress Administration--

For Release in Morning Newspapers
Wednesday, May 27, 1936

Hopkins Replies to Missouri Republican National Committeeman.

Harry L. Hopkins, Works Progress Administrator, yesterday sent the following letter to Arthur M. Curtis, Assistant to the Chairman of the Republican National Committee, and Republican National Committeeman from Missouri, replying to charges by Mr. Curtis that relief funds had been used for political purposes in Missouri:
May 26, 1936

Mr. A. M. Curtis,
Republican National Committeeman from Missouri,
Assistant to the Chairman,
Republican National Committee,
Barr Building,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

If the charges made in your letter to me of May 21, 1936, which you say "trickle in" to you from your political friends, represent the basis of your political attack on me, you are traveling on pretty thin ice.

Apart from the political billingsgate, which occupies most of your letter, the specific charges you make are in each and every instance untrue; and I am sure from reading your note that you made no effort to check up on the truth of the charges you make, which must indicate that they were made solely for political purposes.

I note that your letter comes to me via the Republican National Committee and mailed from Washington, which fact lends further color to the conviction this document represents political mud-slinging, so that the question of whether or not the alleged facts were true obviously concerns you very little.

Now as to your specific charges:

(1) You allege that one Mrs. Harriett C. Samuels, Joplin, Missouri, in an affidavit which you state you have verified, states that she was discharged from her position ostensibly because she was unemployable, but in reality because of politics.

The truth of the matter is that Mrs. Harriett C. Samuels was laid off because of illness. That at a later date when she was asked to return, she sent word that she was unable to do so.

It further develops that Mrs. Samuels' husband
is working at a full time job, and that she is not in need of employment.

I understand Mrs. Samuels is now making a canvass for membership in the American Recovery Legion in Joplin, Missouri.

(2) You allege that Mrs. Parthenia Gaddy Wilson of Marionville, Missouri, had been laid off because she was a Republican; and you further allege that the District Supervisor told her that she would have to see the Democratic Township Committeeman in order to be reinstated.

The truth of the matter is that it developed on reinvestigation that Mrs. Wilson is single, has no dependents, owns her home, and has sufficient outside work for her support.

The District Supervisor made no such statement as you allege. In fact, he has never been interviewed, nor has he discussed such a subject. At no time has anyone been referred to the Township Committeeman for reinstatement.

(3) You allege that on April 7, 1936, the date of the local election in Sedalia, Missouri, someone appeared on the projects inquiring "whether a Republican or Democratic automobile should come the next day to take them to vote." And you charge that the few men who requested Republican transportation were fired from their jobs less than an hour later.

These charges are untrue.

There was one incident of political maneuvering in Sedalia on the part of two men who were distributing Republican literature during working hours. These two
men were temporarily laid off but later taken back and are now working on the project.

Men were not taken to the polls under the direction of the foremen, nor were they told that if they did not vote the Democratic ticket, they would lose their jobs. This statement is pure fabrication.

(4) You allege that several women were discharged from a sewing project in Sedalia because they refused to join a club.

The truth of the matter is that these women were laid off at the same time as 33 other persons, and there is absolutely no evidence that any political consideration was given in these layoffs. The only consideration was the question of need.

No woman on this project was ever asked to join any club by Mrs. Stella Abbott, the forewoman.

(5) You charge that Viola Chambers was discharged from the same project for political reasons.

Viola Chambers is in the same group referred to by you in your previous charge. She was not discharged for political reasons. The facts relative to this would have been readily available to you, had you or your political representative sought them.

(6) You allege that Lee Ray Ebert, Sedalia, Missouri, claims to have been discharged because of politics.

The truth of the matter is that Mr. Ebert was not discharged on April 6th, but worked for the WPA through April 14th, when he was reassigned to a contractor on a highway project.
(7) Your allegations relative to George Bartholomaeus have nothing whatever to do with the WPA. He is not in our employ, and we are in no way responsible for any of his activities. If workers in the WPA choose to subscribe to a magazine, they certainly have the same right to do that as they have to buy a radio or washing machine. This is surely neither your affair nor mine.

I assume that as one of the paid political agents of the G.O.P., it is part of your duties to write inaccurate, misleading, and false statements to public officials. It is only on such an assumption and because of extreme political partisanship that I could believe you would deliberately misstate the facts.

Very sincerely yours,

[Signature]

Administrator.