

THE WORKS PROGRAM

--Works Progress Administration--

For immediate release
July 3, 1936

Colonel Somervell is appointed New York City WPA Administrator.

Works Progress Administrator, Harry L. Hopkins, today announced the appointment of Lieut. Col. Brehon B. Somervell, U. S. A., Corps of Engineers, as Works Progress Administrator for New York City, succeeding Victor Ridder, whose resignation becomes effective August 1.

Colonel Somervell formerly was assistant to Frank Walker, director of the National Emergency Council, in charge of project operation. More recently he has been the engineer in charge of the Atlantic-Gulf ship canal project in Florida.

Mr. Ridder accepted the post on October 15, 1935.

Colonel Somervell, a graduate of West Point with a war record that brought him both the Distinguished Service Medal and the Distinguished Service Cross, was born in Little Rock, Ark., May 9, 1892. Following his graduation from the United States Military Academy in 1914 he completed a course at the graduate Army Engineer School and the Command and General Staff School, then became an honor graduate of the Army War College.

He was promoted successively through the grades from second lieutenant to lieutenant colonel, retaining a permanent rank of major in the Engineers. He was with the punitive expedition in Mexico after the Villa raids of 1916 and served as assistant chief of staff of the 89th Division in France, continuing with the Army of Occupation in Germany after the Armistice.

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Following the World War he served as assistant or district engineer in New York City, Washington, Norfolk and New Orleans; also as assistant to Walker D. Hines on a survey of navigation conditions on the Rhine and Danube rivers for the League of Nations. Colonel Somervell also acted as special advisor in a general economic survey of Turkey.

The late Senator Duncan U. Fletcher of Florida said of Colonel Somervell: "I doubt if there is an engineer in the country who is more capable, better qualified or more competent."

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