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Williams Reports WPA Drought Headquarters Set Up in South as Forest Fires, Grasshoppers and Crickets Intensify Relief Needs in Western States.

With certain counties in Mississippi added to the drought areas of the South and West, Malcolm J. Miller, WPA field representative, was ordered today by Deputy Works Progress Administrator Aubrey Williams to establish headquarters at Atlanta, Georgia, to direct drought work-relief projects in Virginia, North and South Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia and Mississippi.

This announcement followed a lengthy conference the President had with Mr. Williams during the morning at the White House. The Deputy Administrator reported to the President the progress being made by the WPA in putting approximately 75,000 destitute farmers to work in the affected areas.

Mr. Miller will supervise plans for placing more than 20,000 destitute persons to work in the drought areas of the Southern States.

He reported to Mr. Williams today that conditions were bad in Georgia, Alabama and South Carolina. Certain areas in Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee and Mississippi were also described by Mr. Miller as being parched by heat and lack of rain.

Meanwhile, intensified drought conditions were reported in North Dakota and Wyoming in a survey of the area by Howard O. Hunter, Assistant Administrator of the Works Progress Administration, directing drought relief operations from Chicago.

Forest fires and an infestation of grasshoppers and crickets are adding to the damage in Wyoming, Will G. Metz, State WPA Administrator, reported from Cheyenne. The drought area is spreading steadily, he added.

Regular works projects have been closed down in four Wyoming counties and all workers in this section have been assigned to combat "unusually dangerous forest fires," the report continued. Three of the fires were believed under control today. The fire-fighting forces, Administrator Metz explained, were being paid from Emergency Relief Administration funds raised by selling sheep rots.
Other workers in Wyoming were busy today building small dams and reservoirs, drilling wells and developing springs to increase and conserve the water supply.

"Situation here is unusually critical," Judge A. M. Christianson of the North Dakota Supreme Court and leader in State welfare activities, telegraphed Mr. Hunter from Bismarck. "Drought has increased in severity daily. In large sections of the State ranchers who heretofore have been self-sustaining are threatened with disaster and loss of herds. In order to save herds, it is imperative they be moved where pasture is available.

Thomas H. Hodde, Works Progress Administrator, also stressing the seriousness of conditions there, reported 11,000 persons now employed on WPA rolls in the State and asserted that the drought would make necessary the addition of 1,000 daily during the present emergency.

In addition to these States, South Dakota, Minnesota and Montana were continuing to expand their works programs, featuring water conservation projects.

South Dakota led in the number of these projects now under way, State WPA Administrator M. A. Kennedy reporting a total of 46 dams now being constructed.

All counties in North Dakota have been certified as in the primary drought area by the Department of Agriculture, Mr. Hunter was notified today.

In South Dakota 35 counties were classified in the primary drought area and four were marked in the secondary area out of a total of 69 counties. Only a narrow belt in southeastern South Dakota escaped severe damage.

The primary drought area in this State includes the following counties: Aurora, Beadle, Brown, Brule, Buffalo, Butte, Campbell, Clark, Corson, Custer, Day, Deuel, Edmunds, Fall River, Faulk, Haakon, Hand, Harding, Hughes, Hyde, Jackson, Jerauld, Jones, Lyman, Marshall, McPherson, Meade, Pennington, Perkins, Potter, Roberts, Spink, Stanley, Sully, Walworth, Ziebach.

The Works Progress Administration is extending special aid only to those drought areas certified as "primary." Sections of Minnesota, Montana and Wyoming are included, in addition to the seven Southern States including areas recently added to this classification. The latter include North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, and Mississippi.

Employment rolls of the Works Progress Administration in the five Great Plains States suffering most from the drought total 83,434, with a particularly
rapid rise in the Dakotas and Montana, reports showed. The total includes a large
number who were destitute before the present drought began, Mr. Hunter explained.

North Dakota’s schedule of 1,000 new WPA employes a day during the emer-
gency indicated the most rapid rise, but South Dakota is preparing to handle more
than 7,000 additional cases during the next few weeks and Montana is facing almost
as heavy an employment schedule. Minnesota, with nearly 45,000 now on WPA rolls,
expected only a moderate increase and Wyoming was scheduling projects expected to
care for 1,200 additional cases.