Oklahoma Is Added to Drought States As WPA Rushes Water Conservation Projects In West and Road Building in South.

With Oklahoma added today to the rapidly spreading drought areas in the Western and Southern states, the slogan of "In Time of Drought, Prepare for Rain," has been adopted as farmers turned from their fields to build the most extensive water conservation system ever attempted in the western parched belt with the aid of the Works Progress Administration.

The watering of live stock is not considered a serious problem in the States of Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, South Carolina, Georgia, North Carolina and Virginia and farmers finding themselves destitute because of the drought will be put to work on projects such as Farm-to-Market roads. Water conservation projects will be carried out in Oklahoma.

Reports sent to Deputy Works Progress Administrator Aubrey Williams today by Howard O. Hunter, assistant WPA Administrator in charge of field operations in the Western drought area, and from Malcolm J. Miller, field representative, in charge of drought projects in the Southern States, showed hundreds of dams now under construction in the Dakotas, Minnesota, Montana, and Wyoming, with plans for additional dams and reservoirs that will reach into the thousands.
Mr. Miller reported cotton, corn and truck crops damaged heavily in the Southern belt. Rain brought to an end a 85-day Drought in Tennessee on July 2, but reports show it came too late to save crops causing many farmers to face destitution.

"Every county in North Dakota is being blanketed with water conservation projects," Thomas H. Moodie, State Administrator, reported. "Our plans call for an average of four dams in each county. Deep well projects in livestock areas also are being stressed and much of this work will start next week."

Dams were under construction in North Dakota today at Maddock, Hague, Fairfield, Braddock, Center, Edmore, Grano, Moorton, Rocklake, Harvey, Carpio, Burlington, Hope, Hettinger and Epping.

The largest earth-filled dam in the world is nearing completion at Etting, impounding the waters of a spring-fed creek to assure farmers and ranchers within a radius of 10 miles of a constant water supply.

Work will start in a few days on dams in the following counties of North Dakota, Burleigh, Golden Valley, Grand Forks, Griggs, McLean, Pembina, Rolette, Slope, Starke.

Designs have been filed with the Works Progress Administration for an additional 85 dams in North Dakota, two each in Barnes, Billings, Divide, Hettinger, Nelson and Sioux Counties, five each in Benson and Bottinger Counties, three each in Morton, Rolette and Towner Counties, seven in Cavalier County, four each in Burke, Dunn, McLean, Renville, Steel Ward, Williams, one each in Bowman, Eddy, Grand Forks, McHenry, Mountrail, Oliver, Pembina, Pierce, Slope and Stark Counties.
The drought area in this state is rapidly increasing, State Administrator Moodie said. Assignment of destitute farmers to WPA dam and road projects has reached 3,235, making a total of 11,735 on WPA rolls.

South Dakota has started 58 dam projects which will employ 2,400 drought victims. It has also set up 110 road projects. A total of 1,200 men was assigned to these projects Friday and more than 6,000 drought victims were to be assigned by tonight.

From Minnesota came word that drought conditions in Central Western Counties were becoming more severe. These counties include numerous water conservation projects, including the Lac Qui Parle Lake, providing a reservoir covering approximately 40 square miles. Their farmers are "exerting every effort to salvage hay and other crops", S. Kudish, Deputy Administrator of the Works Progress Administration for Minnesota, reported, but a rapid increase in WPA rolls is expected shortly.

The Minnesota district where drought damage is becoming more severe includes Traverse, Grant, Douglas, Stevens, Pope, Big Stone, Swift, Lac Qui Parle, Chippewa and Yellow Medicine Counties.

Wyoming was continuing to battle forest fires as well as drought today, Will G. Metz, State Administrator of the Works Progress Administration, reported from Cheyenne. With no relief from general drought conditions in sight, Mr. Metz said, the affected area is increasing. Water conservation projects are being speeded and the number to be employed on WPA projects is expected to double between July 15 and July 20.

Montana was preparing one of the most ambitious water conservation programs. One blanket project now pending calls for 800 reservoirs. County water conservation programs are now being drafted and an augmented
engineering force is now in the field staking out reservoir sites, C. W. Fowler, Deputy State Administrator of the Works Progress Administration, said today.

Monday morning the Montana forces will begin work on 5 reservoirs in Garfield County, 3 in Rosebud County and one each in Fallon and Carter Counties. The force of workers on Deadmans Basin, largest water conservation project in the State, is being increased rapidly.

Appeals from Colorado and Nebraska, not now classified in the drought area, indicated that sections of these States are being seriously affected. Governor Ed C. Johnson of Colorado wired Harry L. Hopkins, Works Progress Administrator, and Mr. Hunter.

"Eastern Colorado drought condition becoming more alarming and rapidly enlarging day by day". "Crop Conditions in western Nebraska were reported to indicate widespread failure.

Further reports of growing relief needs came from Kentucky and South Carolina.

George H. Goodman, State Administrator of the Works Progress Administration, reported extremely serious conditions in 90 of Kentucky's 120 counties. There will be no gardens and no crops in two-thirds of the state unless rains come soon, he asserted, urging "special drought relief consideration". The large farm labor and farm tenant population of Kentucky and the subnormal employment with several strikes in the Coal Fields since the Guffey Coal Act Decision, also were cited.

Lawrence M. Pinckney, State Administrator of The Works Progress Administration in South Carolina, estimates that an increase of 10,000 in employment rolls will be necessary to care for those destitute as a result of the drought.

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