Drought Aid Program is Adopted for Dakotas; Destitution Reported Spreading in Southern States; Nurses in Demand in Parched Areas.

Deputy Administrator Aubrey Williams announced late today that an agreement had been reached between Assistant Administrator Howard O. Hunter, representing the Works Progress Administration, and Resettlement Administrator Rexford Tugwell at Bismarck, N.D., on a program designed to take care of all destitute farmers in the drought areas of North and South Dakota.

A four-point plan was adopted by the Government officials following a two-day conference with State officials in the North Dakota capital.

The program as outlined by Mr. Williams is as follows:

1. The Works Progress Administration shall be responsible for providing work for all needy employable persons.

2. This work would be in the nature of water conservation, water development, earth dams and projects organized near homes of the people.

3. The Resettlement Administration will provide aid in the form of grants to people unable to perform work.

4. The Resettlement Administration will move feed into the drought area and will provide loans for the purpose of aiding the farmers and purchasing feed.
Applicants for aid in rural areas, Mr. Hunter reported to Mr. Williams, will receive instructions to apply directly to the Resettlement Administration offices in their counties.

This agency will extend aid to all needy cases or send them to the Works Progress Administration, which will provide jobs. County welfare boards will assist the Resettlement Administration, it was agreed, in handling the applications and determining the individual needs.

Under this agreement it is expected that the system will be functioning by next Monday, but until then, in order to avoid any delay, the Works Progress Administration will accept all applicants recommended to them by either the Resettlement Administration or the welfare boards.

There will be no direct grants for feed and livestock, it was explained, but loans will be made in any case where the farmer has sufficient equity or can obtain a waiver of claims from the holder of a mortgage.

Assurance came from the Treasury Department that special measures would be inaugurated to speed delivery of checks to all needy persons properly certified in the drought area.

State officials attending the conference today and yesterday included Governors Walter Welford of North Dakota, and Tom Berry of South Dakota. The conferees were informed by State officials that approximately 80,000 farm families in the two States will require Federal aid.

At the same time, Works Progress Administration officials in cooperation with other State and Federal authorities administering drought relief in Southern States, were revising upward their estimates of the numbers requiring aid.

Malcolm J. Miller, WPA field representative in the Southeast, said in Atlanta that the original estimate of approximately 20,000 might be
A decision was expected to be reached following conferences held in Atlanta yesterday and today and others scheduled for Montgomery, Ala., tomorrow and Oklahoma City, Monday. "We shall probably have to work out two sets of figures," Mr. Miller informed his office in New Orleans, "one for those requiring immediate assistance and another for those who will need help later in the summer and fall.

"The first group, smaller in number than the second, includes those borderline cases, farm laborers principally, whose day to day existence depends upon employment in the fields. With the virtual destruction of crops in many sections notably the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama and Oklahoma, this group faces the most immediate crisis. Their sole hope rests in being given WPA jobs right away in order that they may buy food.

"The second group made up of tenants, share croppers, owners of small farms and laborers, as well, is faced with the longer pull of the certain failure of both cash and food crops on which they have depended.

"The lives of these people are geared to a late summer or fall harvest but for thousands of them there will be no harvest this year. They are prepared to take care of themselves, for the present, but their supplies are already beginning to dwindle and in coming weeks they will have to apply in increasing numbers for outside help."

Georgia and South Carolina relief offices today were working at full speed on investigation and certification of applicants for assistance. This work is being done jointly by the Works Progress Administration, the Agricultural Extension Service, and local welfare committees.

Funds for the work are being largely supplied by the Works Progress Administration as rapidly as possible.

The most destitute cases are being assigned to jobs on farm-to-market roads and other work projects.
Dr. Wayne Alliston, Works Progress Administrator for Mississippi, reported this morning that his State was less seriously affected on the whole than its neighbors. Considerable crop destruction has been reported from the northern counties but the central and southern portions of the State have survived fairly well.

Louisiana similarly has suffered only in isolated spots. The State has been visited by sporadic thunder showers off and on during the last three days and while abnormal temperatures continue to prevail officials do not feel that an emergency exists.

Texas and Florida have not been affected to any material extent.

Mr. Williams and Mr. Miller were informed by the Department of Agriculture that 28 counties in North Carolina have been officially designated as "primary" drought areas.

Women's projects of the Works Progress Administration in the drought areas of the Great Plains and Southern States are being taxed to capacity in rendering humanitarian services to sufferers.

"We are using every nurse we could find in the Great Plains area to safeguard the health of families," said Mrs. Florence Kerr, regional director of women's and professional projects in the western region.

"There is no reserve of registered nurses and there are only 57 registered nurses at work in North Dakota on the WPA health unit," she continued.

Nursery schools are being opened in public school basements where children play all day in the coolest places available in the sun-parched
territory. Hundreds of such playrooms have been opened by the school authorities and Works Progress Administration women workers placed in charge.

Household aides, all of whom are mature women and the majority of whom have raised families in this same area where their neighbors are in distress, are doing double duty in the homes of suffering families. Cases of heat prostration are being cared for. Precautions against disease from the use of contaminated drinking water are being enforced in homes by women workers in cooperation with and according to instructions of the United States Public Health Service and the Children's Bureau of the U. S. Department of Labor.

While this group of women WPA workers engaged in the immediate relief of human suffering, thousands of women at work in WPA sewing rooms have laid aside other work and are busy cutting and stitching school clothing for use this fall when school will open in the stricken area while poverty still stalks.