

THE WORKS PROGRAM

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--Works Progress Administration--

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Williams Replies to Critics of Works Progress Administration Motion Picture Program.

Deputy Works Progress Administrator Aubrey Williams today issued the following statement:

The Republican National Committee, in the face of twelve years of governmental precedent and on the unsupported statement of a disgruntled former employee, has seen fit to raise the cry of "propaganda" because the Works Progress Administration is taking some motion pictures of its program.

The Republican National Committee is like a small boy whistling in the dark. The utter absurdity of its attack is plain when we realize that not a single picture has been produced under the arrangement so bitterly assailed. The Republican National Committee has not the remotest idea whether or not these pictures will contain any propaganda whatever. I know they will not. Yet the Committee releases an official attack upon the Works Progress Administration solely on the strength of a statement from the former chief of a WPA section abolished nearly three months ago. Tactics of this sort, in lieu of an honest effort to get at the real facts, indicate the extremity to which the Republican National Committee has been forced in its efforts to bring discredit to the Works Progress Administration.

Three successive Republican Administrations have produced literally thousands of reels of Federal motion pictures in dozens of bureaus, large and small, over a period of twelve long years. Why, then, the Republican hubbub over a perfectly legitimate and accepted method of presenting public information?

Can it be that the Republican National Committee is afraid of the truth? Can it be fear that the eye of the camera will reveal a great army of good solid American citizens at work in the construction of good solid American improvements for the benefit of all the people? The Republican National Committee apparently seeks to deny to the Works Progress Administration, a responsible agency of govern-

ment, the right to tell its story through the same medium which Presidents Coolidge and Hoover used to tell the stories of the Departments of Commerce, State, Post Office, Treasury, Agriculture, Interior, Labor, War and Navy. The Republicans set every precedent for Federal motion pictures.

As far as I know, no Democrat ever questioned the right of these Republican administrations to produce thousands of motion picture reels, which they did. There was no legitimate reason to question these productions if they were properly produced. Article I, Section 9 of the Constitution provides for "a regular statement and account" of public expenditures. Obviously the purpose of this mandate of the Constitution is to give the electors a report, not only of the amount of receipts and expenditures, but of the manner in which expenditures are made and the results obtained. The motion picture is recognized everywhere as one of the best methods of presenting information.

The WPA is proud of its program. Its activities are by far the largest of any single government agency today. It directly affects the lives of more people than any other Federal agency.

The WPA makes no apology for an attempt to take its story before the bar of the American people. If anything, it has remained silent too long. The Mayors of more than 1,000 American cities and towns, embracing all political faiths, have testified in writing to the good which WPA has done for millions of citizens in dire need, and for thousands of communities in the form of better facilities for the average family.

The WPA is not only a group of officials in Washington. It is the officials of thousands of towns and counties and park boards and school boards who have originated and put forward useful community improvements which could be done by local people who had no work to do; and above all it is millions of sincere American Citizens, willing and able to work, who with few exceptions have been doing their best in a very difficult situation.

These workers have been lampooned and ridiculed as shovel-leaners and malcontents. The facts are that they are building 130,000 miles of farm-to-market roads, building or improving 6,200 schools, 5,700 playgrounds, 5,300 other public buildings, more than 5,000 sewer systems, more than 2,500 water systems, more than 500 airports, thousands of flood control and conservation projects, and giving a myriad of health