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WPA Increases Employment Quota in Drought Area.

Raging forest fires, adding to the woes of northern Minnesota and Wisconsin farmers, already near destitution because of drought and insect plagues, today prompted Works Progress Administration officials to authorize "immediate" employment of fire victims on regular Works Progress Administration projects.

Howard O. Hunter, Assistant Administrator in charge of west and midwest drought relief, has instructed Minnesota Works Progress Administration officials to waive usual certification of persons "burned out" by the fires and to extend aid in the form of jobs to all those known to have lost their homes or crops, Deputy Works Progress Administrator Aubrey Williams announced today.

Samuel Kudish, Deputy WPA Chief for Minnesota, estimated over two million acres already have been destroyed in the Lake Superior tinderbox area. Inaccessibility to the afflicted areas made it impossible, he said, to estimate accurately the number of families in the region who would receive immediate job aid.

"WPA operations have been stopped in the fire zone and all available man power has been assigned to help fight the shifting blazes," he said. "Fire and drought victims in the area will be put to work helping the WPA fire-fighters already on the job."
Meanwhile Weather Bureau officials held little hope of relief for seared crops in the rest of the drought area. Predicted showers in parts of Nebraska, Minnesota and Iowa failed to do more than settle the dust and temperatures continued at death-dealing heights ranging from 108 to 120 degrees over large expanses from the Dakotas to Texas.

In ten of the thirteen western states now included in the "emergency" area, employment of drought victims on Works Progress Administration projects crossed 61,000 today, Mr. Hunter reported. This is an increase of more than 5,000 over yesterday's employment figure.

"With Iowa, Wisconsin and Illinois swinging into action on their drought relief programs, WPA will have at least 75,000 drought-stricken farmers at work by Monday," he said.

"WPA machinery in all afflicted states is now functioning effectively so that there is no lag between certification of needy farmers and actual employment on jobs."

Mr. Hunter increased the employment quota to 111,500, for the 13 states under his jurisdiction by doubling Missouri's 5,000 drought jobs. He expressed the belief that unless substantial weather relief is forthcoming, the full quota would be used up in meeting the needs of additional farmers requiring assistance between now and September 1.