Back at his desk after an inspection tour of 10 Western States, Harry L. Hopkins, Works Progress Administrator, prepared the following summary of his observations:

There is no substitute for first-hand observation. I learned a lot on this trip through the West. Looking back over the hundreds of projects I saw in ten states out there and adding up all this information to see what it comes to, I am impressed chiefly with four or five outstanding facts about this relief business.

One of them is the way our relief loads have been going down. They have gone way down.

We had about 3,025,000 people working for WPA at the end of the first week of March, I recall. At the end of the first week of this month—six months later—we had just about 2,400,000 on WPA rolls. That's a drop of 20 per cent, or quite a lot more than ordinary seasonal reduction. There has been some confusion about that, I believe. The drought has forced us to put some 200,000 farmers to work and even more of them will need help in the next few months. These emergency measures have brought a temporary rise in the total recently, but the normal load has continued to diminish, and even with all these drought cases we are still about 20 per cent under the number we were employing last March.

(Attached is a report showing the decrease in WPA and general relief rolls in Western States from March 1936, to July, 1936. Each of these States shows a decline in WPA rolls and only one record an increase in general relief cases.)

Another thing that impressed me is what this thing has done for the small taxpayer and small home owner. You can see it on all sides in the improvement of financial conditions of local governments. It's the little fellow who
pays most of the local tax bill. Municipal deficits are disappearing and security defaults are being cleared up. In little over a year more than half the defaults in cities of more than 10,000 have been cured. The improvement, measured in dollars and cents, is even greater than that indicates, because most of those still in default are small communities. Interest rates on bonds are the lowest in 20 years. Property values are rising, tax collections improving, and in many places the rates are lower than at any time since the late '20's.

I think WPA has a fair claim to a share of responsibility for this improvement. It enabled financially distressed communities to carry on services which the local governments themselves were too poor to continue. We don't replace any regular public employees with relief workers, of course, but we have taken a big load off local government and we have been able in many cases to help them collect the necessary taxation that was due them. I saw the result of one property assessment project—a white collar project in Seattle. They stopped so much tax evasion there that the property owners who were paying their just bills will no longer have to carry a lot of others who were able to pay—and that means sound reduction of tax rates.

One other thing you can't miss when you get out and see this work first-hand is that the communities and taxpayers are getting dollar for dollar value for the money spent. Sometimes they are getting a lot more than that.

I saw three or four hundred projects—all over the West—and I didn't find a bad one. Every one of them was sponsored locally and has the support of the people regardless of party politics. You just don't find these "terrible" projects some of our critics talk about when you get down to actual inspection of them. They are never where you are looking. They are always somewhere else—in another state.

Take, for example, one of the projects we saw in Wyoming. It illustrates what the people out there are getting for their money.

The original Wheatland reservoir, on the Laramie river in Wyoming, one of the pioneer irrigation ventures in this state, was designed to convert barren prairie into profitable farm land used by 400 families. Approximately 43,000 acres were ditched. When rainfall was plentiful, there was an abundant yield of sugar beets. The town of Wheatland and its sugar beet mill, as well as
the surrounding territory, depended upon this reservoir. The dam and water storage basin, however, proved inadequate for this district in years of sub-normal rainfall. Five such years reduced a once prosperous section to poverty.

But in 1934 the government came to the rescue with a project designed to double the water storage capacity and assure adequate irrigation even in drought years. Begun under the Emergency Relief Administration, the job is now nearing completion under WPA. Material and equipment were supplied by the irrigation district, the local sponsor; the labor by the federal agencies. Approximately 225 needy farmers were employed.

The original, though designed to impound 90,000 acre feet of water, could not hold more than 73,000 acre feet. This dam has been enlarged so that the full 90,000 acre feet can be stored. Then a canal three miles long was started to link it with a natural basin which will store an additional 90,000 acre feet. Once filled, there will be enough water to carry the crops through two years without replenishment.

All this is being done at a cost of only $4 an acre foot. As two acre feet of water are sufficient for one growing season in this section, an adequate water supply will be provided at a cost of $8 an acre. The return on this investment is clearly indicated in crop records. When sufficient water is available, the sugar beet lands yield $50 to $70 an acre. Without enough water, crop failure is inevitable.

As I looked over this great water conservation project, I could not keep from looking away to the north and thinking of the contrast between this investment of public funds and that of Teapot Dome, a hundred miles away, where one of the darkest chapters in the history of conservation was written in the early '20's.

In Ogden, Utah, I saw an entirely different type of project—the Ordnance depot. This is one of the largest WPA projects in Utah, employing 400 men at the peak of construction. Under the guidance of army officers, WPA workers have been working for months constructing storage buildings, rebuilding the railway line and otherwise restoring and improving the depot. Men, untrained in such construction, have been trained to proficiency under army officers' direction.
I broke ground for the construction of a loading and assembly plant adjacent to the Ordnance depot. The 160-acre site was donated by the Ogden Chamber of Commerce.

In Salt Lake City, I conferred with WPA and city officials on an enlargement of the municipal airport project there. It is probably the No. 1 project for this section, and will put from 500 to 800 men to work this winter. Drainage facilities to prevent flood conditions have been completed. Work on the improvement of the airport has been going on since last October and a new project to provide hard surfacing of the runways is now under consideration.

A state-wide project in Idaho operates for the protection of crops. The eradication of noxious weeds is an important service in this State where the project operates in 43 counties. Chemicals and gas are used for choking out the weeds that are a menace particularly to potato growers. At Pocatello, I saw two fine stadiums that were built by WPA workers.

In Butte, I saw a number of WPA projects, including a new highway built for more than 1,400 feet across a deep gully and eliminating numerous steep grades and dangerous curves, providing a traffic outlet to the Big Butte highway. In process of construction, the workers moved an unsightly dump, provided a playground for children, eliminated two garbage heaps that had been regarded as breeding places for disease, filled an abandoned mine shaft, salvaged old timber that was distributed to needy families for fuel and replaced a number of storm sewers that had rotted out.

Among the projects visited in the State of Washington was an arboretum and botanical garden located on a 200-acre tract in Seattle near the University of Washington. This project is in Washington Park on publicly owned property and includes a greenhouse, water and drainage system. Another was the dredging of a lake in one of the municipal parks. This will purify the water to such an extent that three public bathing beaches will be restored to use.

I inspected a project in Seattle which is outstanding in the State. It is an 18-hole municipal golf course located on a reclaimed tract of 208 acres within the city limits. This will serve as a recreational center for an area which is separated from the rest of the city by an arm of Puget Sound, and, by
reason of topography, is largely a separate community.

There were a number of projects in Oregon that impressed me. There seemed to be no doubt as to the value of any of them. Portland, for example, has always wanted to be nearer to the sea. To get to the northern beaches required a drive of 108 miles to Tillamook and another 10 miles to the coast. The Wilson River road project, one of the longest stretches of highway under construction by WPA, not only is employing hundreds of the jobless out there, but is cutting the distance from Portland to Tillamook by 36 miles, or about one-third. I didn't hear anyone call that "boondoggling." Four counties, in addition to the city of Portland, are cooperating in sponsoring this project. I was told that this was the first time they ever got together on a public improvement program.

Portland, after determining that its old airport was becoming inadequate and incapable of expansion, purchased a tract of land about a mile square at an expense of nearly $300,000 and on this WPA has over a thousand men engaged in the construction of a modern airport.

Another project out there that means something to the nation as a whole, as well as to Oregon, is the help WPA has extended to the flax industry. Fiber flax has been grown in the Willamette valley of Oregon since its territorial days and the quality has equaled, if not surpassed, that of the Irish, Belgian and French fields. Half a million acres near Mt. Angel were found suited to its production, but this country was importing $100,000,000 worth of linen a year. The average number of acres planted to flax in the Willamette valley during the 10 years from 1925 to '35 was only 2,077, though it was yielding about $55 an acre. Seeing a chance to rehabilitate Oregon farmers and workers alike, the WPA authorized construction of three badly needed plants to process the crop. The farmers themselves donated sites for the plants, bound themselves to plant a fixed acreage for five years and agreed to pay part of the equipment cost. The state is providing managers and consultants for the plants. WPA is putting up about $64,000. As a result, the flax industry in Oregon promises to prove increasingly profitable, enlarging private employment opportunities and private payrolls. Oregon has about 70 times as much flax-producing area as North Ireland. With the aid extended by WPA it can expand its production without the least
damage to the oil and flaxseed crops of the Middle West, which are non-competitive.

At San Francisco, Mills Field, one of the busiest air terminals in the United States, is being extended through the reclamation of about 200 acres of land by construction of a bulkhead, filling in of the low land and drainage of the land back of the airport. A ramp and marine railway capable of handling the largest seaplanes are under way. Two of the three runways on the field have been completed and the third has been graded and ready for hard-surfacing. This job employs about 1600 men.

The contribution of federal funds toward the improvement of airports of this type is for useful work. Men formerly on relief are on the jobs, which are similar, in many respects, to the federal development of rivers and harbors and highways that has been going on for many years.

The fact is that WPA has not confined itself to the airways but has considered recommendations of sponsoring communities when approved by the Bureau of Air Commerce and is constructing airports off the airways where they will contribute to the safety of the non-scheduled or miscellaneous flying.

Also in San Francisco, I saw the project for which the Works Progress Administration literally laid the foundation. This is the municipal recreation ground a little more than a mile from the Ferry Building and 1500 feet from Yerba Buena Island, an important U. S. Navy Station. The reclamation of the site for this improvement, which later may become an important air base, was done as a WPA project which entailed construction of a sand fill and sea-wall on Bay Shoals northwest of Yerba Buena Island.

Improvement of the Arroyo Seco, work on the Slauson Ave. and Westlake storm drains and the Hyperian sewage disposal plant are outstanding projects in Los Angeles. An inspection tour of such projects as the Griffith Park work certainly does not substantiate charges made by uninformed critics that WPA projects are not useful.

At Phoenix, I dedicated the new Stadium at the Arizona state fairgrounds, a reinforced concrete structure seating 10,000. This building is one of the largest of its kind built by WPA. Three hundred sixty men from Arizona relief rolls were employed in its construction. One hundred men were employed
on additional projects, including eight horse barns and an adobe wall around the
grounds. The adobe bricks, numbering several hundred thousand, were made by WPA
workers. The stadium is 50 feet high and 550 feet long. It replaces a temporary
structure which had burned two and a half years ago and which the state had been
unable to rebuild.

Near Clarkdale, north of Prescott, I saw the restoration of the
Tuzigoot Ruins, a WPA project of wide historical interest.

In New Mexico there are more than 270 rural school projects completed
and under way, each of which involves construction of from one to several new
schools, additions, improvements, school grounds and recreation facilities. One
project provided for the building of 1200 school desks.

Governor Clyde Tingley has been personally interested in the school
building and improvement program and has watched its progress closely. He told
me that he believes these WPA projects are the greatest contribution to the rural
school education in New Mexico since educational opportunities were made available
to all children in the State. The schools are modern and meet requirements of
the State Board of Education and the State fire regulations. New Mexico has
devoted one-fourth of its WPA building funds to public building projects.

A flood control project in Colorado, now safeguards the citizens
of Denver whose lives and property have been menaced for years. The channels
of the north and south end of the Platte River and the Cherry Creek diversion
have been cleaned, deepened, widened, straightened, riprapped and made almost
impregnable to the dangers of cloudbursts and floods in the future. Wide embankments have been so constructed as to give the city a series of attractive
boulevard drives extending for miles. Scores of bridges have been built,
hundreds of concrete culverts installed, and wire guard rails established on a
portion of the 308 miles of road-ways that have been constructed by WPA during
the past nine months.

No program can be better than the people who are actually operating
the projects, and no impression I received on this trip was stronger than that
created by the fine type of men and women engaged in this work.

In state after state, I found capable administrators and engineers
scanning every step of construction and smiling with justified pride at the
quality of the work that was emerging.

Undisturbed by the taunts of those who make a business of fault-finding, with that protective covering everyone who tries to do a big job must acquire, administrative workers were plugging away at their jobs, confident that the results will speak for themselves in due time. It is a constant source of inspiration to work with people like that.

From the workers themselves, however, came perhaps the deepest sense of satisfaction on this trip. There has been no greater slander in recent years than the false characterization of these men as a lot of lazy shovel-leaners. Get out and meet them if you don’t believe it. I have no patience with the judgment pronounced by those who rely on club lounge gossip to condemn the jobless who got their first break through this program. In man-to-man contact you find them pretty much the same as other Americans. They are eager to work for what they get and proud of the work they are doing.

I have tried to cover just a fair cross-section of the work I found in every state I visited. It is difficult to estimate the value of all these improvements, as there is much more to be considered than a mere inventory of physical property. There is the morale and skill of the workers to consider.

Aside from all this, the Works Progress Administration is contributing something like $120,000,000 a month to our people’s purchasing power through wage earnings alone. That’s a real tonic to the nation’s business.

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### NUMBER OF CASES RECEIVING RELIEF AND NUMBER OF PERSONS EMPLOYED ON THE WPA PROGRAM

March and July 1936

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State or City</th>
<th>March 1936</th>
<th>July 1936</th>
<th>Percent Decrease or Increase March 1936 to July 1936</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General Relief Cases</td>
<td>WPA Persons Employed</td>
<td>Total</td>
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<td><strong>ARIZONA</strong></td>
<td>4,183</td>
<td>11,439</td>
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<td>12,684</td>
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<td><strong>MONTANA</strong></td>
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<td><strong>NEW MEXICO</strong></td>
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<td>16,463</td>
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<td><strong>OREGON</strong></td>
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<td>16,543</td>
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<td>46,114</td>
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<td><strong>WYOMING</strong></td>
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<td><strong>SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA</strong></td>
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<td><strong>LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA</strong></td>
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<td>63,080</td>
<td>116,533</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-25.0</td>
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<td><strong>DENVER, COLORADO</strong></td>
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<td>8,376</td>
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<td>-7.3</td>
<td>-7.3</td>
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</table>

A/ Figures cover entire county in which city is located.
B/ Does not include cases receiving relief from local funds.
C/ Data for June 1936

Note: Data for WPA represent the number of persons employed during the last week in each month. Under existing regulations only one person from a relief family may be employed.

Data for Relief represent the number of cases receiving general relief from public funds during the month.

A small number of cases may be included in both the WPA and general relief figure during any one month due to supplementation of WPA earnings by local relief agencies or because persons newly assigned to WPA continue to receive relief until the first full pay check is received.