

THE WORKS PROGRAM

--Works Progress Administration--

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Hopkins Cites False Charges in Republican National Committee Radio Broadcast.

Harry L. Hopkins, Works Progress Administrator, Wednesday declared the charges made in a broadcast of the Republican National Committee Tuesday night "through its paid mouthpiece are as misleading as they are false."

"It is amazing to me that the Republican National Committee will permit Joe Grundy's henchmen in Pennsylvania to peddle their phony affidavits and second-hand gossip, which is then pawned off on the American people as news," Mr. Hopkins said. "The answers of our State Administrator in Pennsylvania to these politically inspired charges are a complete refutation of the Republican Committee's mudslinging."

Taking up each allegation in the broadcast, Mr. Hopkins issued the following reply:

Statement by the Republican National Committee: "It is also true that members of the New Deal Party who want WPA jobs find it very easy to avoid and evade the rule that says you should be on relief before you are allowed to be on WPA."

Answer by Mr. Hopkins: "Evidently the Committee's speaker is not familiar with the regulations of the WPA which permit the appointment of up to 10 per cent non-relief administrative and supervisory employes, or persons having special skills necessary to carry on a project; also that Congress placed WPA employment on a basis of need rather than previous enrollment on relief lists."

Statement by Republican National Committee: A lengthy affidavit signed by one Harry Ball, Delaware County WPA project engineer, in which Mr. Ball alleges politics interfered with the operation of the WPA program in Delaware County.

Answer by Mr. Hopkins: "The best answer to Mr. Ball's affidavit is to be found in Mr. Ball's own employment on the WPA program in Delaware County. Mr. Ball was a registered Republican; his father was a member of the Chester City Council and a henchman of the McClure political machine. If politics had been predominant in Delaware County, as alleged by Mr. Ball, he, Mr. Ball, could never have been appointed to any administrative or supervisory position on the WPA program.

"Mr. Ball was transferred from Delaware County to Philadelphia County because of complaints that he was using his position to build up the McClure Republican political machine in Delaware County. Subsequent to his making this affidavit he informed persons connected with the administrative staff in Philadelphia that the reason he made the affidavit was that he had been promised a job but that the job would not be delivered to him until he had made the affidavit. As to Mr. Ball's assertions about politics, to the effect that only Democrats could get jobs, it is worthy of note that out of a total of 552 administrative and supervisory employees engaged on the WPA in Delaware County, only 54 per cent are registered Democratic. As to Mr. Ball's assertion that the full advantage was taken of the 10 per cent non-relief exemption, his own statement to the effect that so long as he was in control of the WPA program in Delaware County, supervisory forces were held to 5 per cent, effectively answers his charge.

"The assertion that this percentage was increased recently is false. There has been some increase but it is due to our inability to secure relief workers of particular skills to round out the personnel of projects.

"As to Mr. Ball's statement that predesignations were made by politicians, Mr. Ball knows this to be false. Of course, Democratic leaders gave letters of recommendation for jobs; but so did Republican leaders and office holders, as well as private citizens. In his position as supervisor for Delaware County, Mr. Ball knew full well that he did not have to accept any recommendations unless the person recommended was capable of filling the job."

Statement by the Republican National Committee: A list of seven persons appointed to WPA administrative and supervisory positions, who had been defeated for office, was read over the radio.

Answer by Mr. Hopkins: "This charge is so trivial as to be hardly worth answering. The Committee's speaker does not say when these men were defeated for office or whether they were Republicans, Democratic, Socialist or Communist. For instance, he names "Joseph Schuler," defeated for Mayor, now WPA Administrator for Luzerne County." Mr. Schuler is Administrator of Luzerne County. He was defeated for Mayor of Wilkes-Barre in 1932 - but he happened to be the candidate of the Republican Party."

Statement by the Republican National Committee: An affidavit was broadcast alleging that three persons, William Feinsinger, Harry Schmuckler, said by the speaker to be Democratic Committeemen, and Miss May Brett, said to be a Democratic Registrar, are employed on the WPA program in Philadelphia. It is further alleged by the Republican spokesman that Miss Brett "performed her duties as Registrar of the polling place during the entire registration period on days when she would normally be working on the WPA project."

Answer by Mr. Hopkins: "As to the last allegation, it is noted that no charge is made that Miss Brett was paid by WPA for her time during which she served as Registrar. Two of the three days she served as Registrar her project was not operating. The third day she drew on her accumulated overtime to compensate for her leave. Feinsinger is not now and never was employed by WPA. Schmuckler is working on a WPA project. He is a Democratic Committeeman. The Republican speaker might be surprised to learn that there are Republican Committeemen employed on WPA in Philadelphia."

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