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Vast Increase in Relief Data Shown.

Development of more data about the people in need of relief since 1933 than had been learned about any large population group in the history of the country is shown in some 300 reports and analyses produced by federal relief agencies, Harry L. Hopkins, Works Progress Administrator, announced today.

This information, supplemented by the detailed assignment and work record of every person certified for relief in the United States, provides a reliable guide in the development of a more effective and continuing system of utilizing idle man power to support, rather than weaken, the nation's economy, Mr. Hopkins said.

"When we began work in 1933," Mr. Hopkins continued, "we inherited an irreducible minimum of information about this problem. To carry out our program it was necessary to compile a vast amount of information. Some exceptional cases may illustrate its range.

"There was, for example, one female blacksmith on relief in January of this year. What do we know about her? We know her age, her work history, how long she has been out of work, whether she lives in town or in the country, and her family situation."
"We have the same facts about the seven female teamsters on relief, and the 42 women truck drivers and the 75 women taxicab drivers or chauffeurs and the two railroad switchmen on our rolls who are women.

"Of course these are unusual occupations, like the 17 men on relief whose regular business is taking in washing by the day; but they serve to illustrate the point for all occupations. Naturally, the names and addresses of these persons are not made public, in line with our policy not to add embarrassment to those in need. Now let me go back to describe exactly how we got the information.

"In June 1933, starting with nothing, we set up a nation-wide reporting system on all public relief that was using any Federal funds. In three months it was operating all over the country. This gave us our first count of the number of persons receiving relief; but more information was needed.

"So in October, 1933, we began a census of all cases on relief to determine how old they were, how many men and how many women, how many were whites and how many negroes, how large their families were and whether they lived in urban or rural areas.

"This census, involving 3,186,181 cases and 12,685,664 persons, was completed in two months.

"This was all very well for direct relief, but with work-relief in prospect we realized it was essential to get the facts about the working ability of those on the relief rolls. So in May, 1934, we began to find out on a large scale."
"The urban population was examined first by means of a study which covered the occupational characteristics of 165,000 cases involving a total of 576,000 persons in 79 selected cities. We registered the age, sex, color, occupation, industry and duration of unemployment of these people on the relief rolls. We listed their physical disabilities and the composition of their families. We found out what odd jobs they had been able to obtain on the side. We studied how the duration of unemployment had varied with differences in age, in sex, or in color. We studied the differences between cities with varying economic characteristics. This gave us a pretty clear picture of those on relief in the cities of the country.

We then launched a series of rural studies in carefully selected sample counties, to give us the same information about people on relief in the country areas. In this classification we surveyed about one-third as many persons as we had studied in the cities, since the rural load was about one-third the size of the urban load.

These studies formed the basis on which the work program in the later phases of the ERA was planned.

But when the WPA came into prospect, it was apparent that if work-relief projects were to be devised to fit the needs of the workers, it was necessary to have available a complete inventory of the skills of all the workers on relief in any given county or city.

So we took this complete occupational census of the total relief load of 6,152,000 people in the space of 90 days.

We did not do this just for the abstract purpose of knowing; we had to put people on jobs."
"Besides all the usual information, we had to know each worker's primary occupation, his secondary occupation and his best qualification for the kind of work we could provide under the program. We had to know his family situation, and we had to know the relief make-up of each of the 3,000 odd counties in the country separately.

"By the close of 1935, we felt it necessary to know not only the story of all persons on relief, but also of all the others certified for our jobs who had not yet obtained them. So we carried out a census by counties of the total certified load of 6,386,000 persons in 30 days.

"Of course we do not have the same precise data on people who fall outside our prescribed responsibility. We are given by law a field in which to operate. That field is our concern.

"Obviously it is impossible, in a single statement, to present all of the findings covered by these reports, but I shall be glad to supplement this summary with more specific information on the various subjects covered by our studies."