THE WORKS PROGRAM

---Works Progress Administration---

For Immediate Release,
Sunday, January 24, 1937.

WPA Marshals Force To Conserve Health In Flood Zone.

In a telegram tonight to Works Progress Administrators of eight States, Harry L. Hopkins, Works Progress Administrator, stated that the Works Progress Administration "will provide additional emergency personnel for carrying out necessary sanitary measures to safeguard public health both during the period of high water and after subsidence thereof." Administrator Hopkins advised State Administrators that the United States Public Health Service would designate an officer "to provide coordination, liaison and technical advice."

The telegram was sent after a conference between Administrator Hopkins, Admiral Cary Grayson, chairman of the American Red Cross; War Department and Public Health Service officials.

The telegram sent to State Administrators of Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Missouri, Ohio, Tennessee and West Virginia, reads:

"In connection with flood emergency, Works Progress Administration will provide additional emergency personnel for carrying out necessary sanitary measures to safeguard public health both during period of high water and after subsidence thereof. An officer of Public Health Service will be made available to you to provide coordination, liaison and technical advice. His judgment should be taken as to necessity of sanitary measures which may be proposed. You should arrange conference including public health service officer, state health officer and Red Cross representative to discuss sanitation program. You are authorized to employ under emergency flood project necessary additional supervisory and technical personnel to carry out sanitation program and where necessary such personnel may be hired without
regard to relief status. You are also authorized to purchase such disinfecting materials as may be necessary and are not obtainable from other sources. Red Cross assumes responsibility for providing necessary funds for doctors and nurses required for medical care and public health work not covered in these instructions. (S) Harry L. Hopkins, (Administrator)

On the basis of reports from field representatives at the scene Administrator Hopkins today summarized WPA flood activities as follows:

Approximately 35,000 WPA workers are engaged in rescue work and relief activities in nine States;

All sewing rooms in the districts adjacent to flood areas have been directed to devote all the efforts of WPA workers therein to producing mattresses, comforters, bedding and heavy jackets for the use of flood victims;

Small boats have been built by WPA workers at Cincinnati and others will be built for the use of WPA workers in transporting food and supplies to flood victims marooned in nearby localities and for rescuing people who cannot be reached in any other way. All available launches and other craft on the rivers which can be manned by WPA workers have been pressed into service;

All WPA trucks in the flood areas are being used to transport food and supplies to disaster victims and to evacuate threatened areas;

State WPA Administrators in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Illinois, Missouri, Arkansas and Tennessee have been directed to operate on an emergency basis and to give full cooperation to the Red Cross and all local relief agencies engaged in flood relief.

Howard O. Hunter, regional WPA representative, in direct contact with local WPA Administrators in the Ohio and Mississippi valleys, reported to Mr. Hopkins that the WPA office in Louisville is under water. Some 5,000 WPA workers are engaged in first aid and rescue work in Louisville and suburbs.
George H. Goodman, State WPA Administrator, estimated that 40,000 refugees are being housed in schools, churches and private residences and that from 80,000 to 100,000 Kentuckians have been driven from their homes by the flood. At a late hour Sunday it was reported that Louisville was without fresh water supply.

Mr. Hunter reported that Shawneetown, Illinois, had been cut off and that 200 WPA workers there are marooned with the 1,200 people who reside in the village, nine miles southwest of the junction of the Ohio and Wabash rivers. WPA officials are maintaining contact with the marooned village by short wave radio from Harrisburg, Illinois.

More than 2,600 WPA workers have been assigned to flood control and rescue work in Southern Illinois and 5,000 more are in reserve.

Mr. Hunter also reported that 500 persons in Shawneetown are under medical care in the high school there, and that WPA nurses are assisting in the care of the patients.

Hundreds of WPA workers are patrolling the levees along the Ohio, Mississippi, Wabash, Cache and Saline rivers, concentrating their efforts at Keensburg, Mound City, Mounds, Cairo, McClure, Elizabethtown, Maunie, Rosiclare, Golconda, Brookport and Metropolis.

In the last 12 hours, Matthew S. Murray, WPA Administrator of Missouri, has assigned to emergency flood control work, 2,500 men in Dunklin, Mississippi, New Madrid, Pemiscot and Scott counties in Missouri. He reported that with the aid of the Missouri Highway Department, WPA workers have moved 7,500 refugees to places of safety. Mr. Murray, in his telegram to Mr. Hopkins, added: "Army Engineers are directing our work on levees. The Red Cross is looking after refugees. We have 260 WPA women working on sewing bedding and in soup kitchens. Have instructed major sewing room in State to make bed clothes and heavy jackets. Will make every effort to save levees."