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THE WORKS PROGRAM

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160,000 WPA "Shock Troops" To Battle Mississippi Valley Floods.

Doubling its forces, the Works Progress Administration will have 160,000 workers on duty in the flood zone next week, operating on the entire front from Wheeling, W.Va., to New Orleans, Administrator Harry L. Hopkins announced last night after checking conditions prior to an inspection trip of the area. Administrator Hopkins and Col. F.C. Harrington, Assistant Administrator, will join Maj. Gen. Edwin M. Markham, chief of Army Engineers; Surgeon General Thomas Parran, Jr., of the Public Health Service, and James L. Fieser, Vice-Chairman of the American Red Cross, on this tour, leaving Washington early Sunday for Memphis.

Lieut. Col. Eugene Reybold, U.S. District Engineer with headquarters at Memphis, characterized WPA workmen as the "shock troops" of the flood control battle against the raging Ohio and Mississippi rivers. In reply to a query from Colonel Harrington as to any measures to improve the assistance given by WPA, Colonel Reybold replied that project workers and administrative officials alike in the stricken States are cooperating "100 per cent."

"WPA is doing everything in its power in this district," Colonel Reybold added. "It has gone right in as an ideal work agency, sending men on a moment's notice to any threatened area, and in most cases, the WPA laborers are the first workers on the scene. Don't let anybody tell you these men are shovel-leaners. They are pitching in like good soldiers and working many hours at a stretch."

Administrator Hopkins said special emphasis was being placed on the job of cleaning up the flood zone in the Ohio valley as waters recede. In Louisville, Ky., he pointed out, WPA workers are undertaking the entire clean-up job under the direction of Public Health Service officials. A 24-block area was designated today
in Louisville for the beginning of the work in that city. Similar projects are well under way in cities farther up the Ohio, he added.

All WPA workers in eastern Missouri, Southern Illinois, Arkansas, Tennessee and Mississippi were reported ready for duty in protecting levees or evacuating residents, if not already on the job. In addition to these, Colonel Reybold said, there were a thousand WPA employes in what he described as the "second line of trenches" at Memphis who deserve praise. He referred to the employes in WPA sewing rooms, where women are busy making clothes and other necessities for refugees, and others on duty in the relief havens.

An instance of how WPA works was in evidence today at the office of S. T. Pease, Director of WPA District #5 in western Tennessee. When the call came from Army Engineers for men to hold the threatened levees at Tiptonville, in the northwest corner of the State, Pease immediately informed superintendents to rush WPA workers to the danger zone and told them to hire additional workers if necessary.

Within the hour, WPA laborers were on their way to Tiptonville in WPA trucks, State Highway Department conveyances and private cars.

"The main thing is to get men there," Pease ordered. "Let them work as long as they can stand up and make sure they get plenty of nourishing food from the soup kitchens."

Pease said 7,000 WPA men able to do the arduous work on the levees were available in western Tennessee and he would mass all of them on the Mississippi levees if the Government Engineers called for them.

The mass concentration of workers at Tiptonville was to protect that town of 2,000 from complete inundation, save the Reelfoot Lake region, a western Tennessee Playground and resort, and to keep the Mississippi in its proper channel.