WPA Safety Measures Bring Low Accident Rate

Safety measures of the Works Progress Administration have resulted in an injury and fatality rate far below normal expectancy, according to reports released today by Harry L. Hopkins, Works Progress Administrator.

In 1935 the Department of Labor, basing its estimates on injury expectancy tables, predicted 2,700 fatalities and 454,000 lost-time injuries under the WPA program during a period of twelve months. The Civil Works Administration had reported 375 accidental deaths and 48,000 injuries involving loss of time in nearly one and one-fifth billion man-hours of work, from November, 1933, to April, 1934. There were only 814 accidental deaths and 25,000 disabling injuries during five and one-third billion man-hours worked by WPA employees during the two years from July, 1935, to June, 1937. This is equal to 100,000 men working eight hours a day for 25 years.

The WPA has carried on an intensive and continuous safety campaign under the direction of W. O. Wheary, Director of Safety, with particular emphasis on the training of foremen, abundant provision of safety devices and frequent inspection of projects and equipment. State and district safety staffs are held responsible for the safety of workers. Thousands of first-aid men have been trained. New corrective measures for commonplace types of accidents are constantly being developed.

Vehicles, falling objects and falls of persons were the principal causes of fatal accidents on WPA projects, while handling objects, hand tools, falls of persons and falling objects accounted for most of the disabling injuries.

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