WPA Outlines Broad Program Aiding School Children.

Hundreds of thousands of needy children will benefit during the next school term as a result of work performed on a number of Works Progress Administration projects, Administrator Harry L. Hopkins announced today.

Ellen S. Woodward, Assistant Administrator in charge of the Division of Women's and Professional Projects, reports that school lunch, nursing and public health, housekeeping aid, sewing, library and book repair, museum, and other projects will supply needed services to needy school children.

By the end of the last school term approximately one million needy children had benefited by the WPA school lunch projects, Mrs. Woodward reported. School lunches, she stated, have been served at the rate of 500,000 daily in 10,000 schools.

This year, with the decrease in Federal relief appropriations, a larger share of the cost in the operation of the project is expected to be borne by the local communities. Usually the WPA furnishes only labor and all other items of expense are borne by the sponsor. The Federal Surplus Commodities Corporation furnishes food where available and many gardening and canning projects also
supply available foodstuffs for the projects. In many places, boards of education, city organizations, welfare groups and cooperating sponsors such as the Parent-Teacher Association and other civic groups frequently bear a large portion of the expense for this purpose.

The school lunches provides an opportunity to supplement inadequate meals eaten at home. For example, in a great number of cases, children come to school with either no breakfast at all or a meager one.

Often whole communities of children suffer from malnutrition as a result of improper diet. In one small town in Colorado, an examination of school children revealed that in 53 cases out of 350, the children had teeth almost beyond repair as a result of a diet deficient in minerals. Under the Works Progress Administration program, supervisors, trained in home economics and dietetics, arrange school-lunch menus designed to overcome diet deficiencies as evidenced in certain localities and in a variety of individual cases.

Typical meals are a vegetable stew, a sandwich, a glass of milk, and some fruit; or perhaps creamed chipped beef on toast, cocoa, and applesauce.

The canning of surplus commodities is closely related to the school lunch program in every state where both projects operate and much of the canning is done specifically for use in school lunches.

South Carolina, which last year had the largest WPA school lunch program of all the states except New York, also had in operation one of the largest WPA gardening and canning projects during the past spring and summer. Ground, fertilizer, seeds, plants and much of the labor were contributed by the various communities for school gardens, the produce of which will be used for lunches during the school year now opening.
Clinical work as a part of the WPA Health Program lays emphasis on the care and safeguarding of children's health, Mrs. Woodward explained. To date, more than 9,000,000 visits, examinations or treatments have been given by WPA nurses to millions of needy persons, a large percentage of whom are children.

In New York City, about 200 dentists, hygienists and administrative workers on one project alone conduct remedial and educational work in about 100 clinics distributed throughout the city. In one month during the last school term, 28,900 school children had their teeth examined.

In Chicago, children in 254 of the city's elementary schools had their eyes tested on WPA health projects last school year. Several thousand had treatments resulting in cures or decided improvement.

A WPA nurse in one county of Wyoming has been able to establish an annual tonsil clinic. Any child in the county whose family is unable to employ a private physician is welcome. In the same county, the nurse has taken more than 40 eye cases to one of the leading eye specialists in the state.

In New Jersey, the Works Progress Administration during the last school term supplied public health nurses in public schools of 45 districts, where no such service previously existed, and supplemented the inadequate regular service in several other districts. As a result
of this activity, 16 school districts have assumed full responsibility for nursing services and 10 of the project nurses have found permanent employment with the schools or with public health nursing organizations. As financial conditions permit, other school districts propose to undertake the work as a regular activity.

Housekeeping aid projects employ needy women, who are good homemakers, but who have no trade or professional skills, to assist in housework and care of children in the homes of needy families. In many such homes where the mother is temporarily ill and unable to assist the family, WPA housekeeping aides on the opening day of school are found preparing breakfast and seeing that the children leave for their classes clean and comfortably clothed. This type of project, reports indicate, has been responsible for keeping many underprivileged families together in time of stress, and through it many communities have been saved the expense of hospital or institutional care. All homes visited are referred to the project supervisor by responsible local relief agencies.

The Works Progress Administration also is reaching 2,000,000 persons, many of them of school age, who were without free public library service. WPA Library Extension centers are furnishing books and magazines to hundreds of thousands of families who previously lacked such advantages. Under this program many rural schools are being supplied for the first time with reading materials needed in regular courses.

A WPA state-wide project in Ohio has made possible a circulation of some 30,000 books and 40,000 magazines to 280 back country centers in 18 counties. A WPA carrier who operates out from West Union, county seat of Adams county, follows a route where many of the roads are little more than wagon trails. During bad weather she is forced to
change from her small automobile, throw her books in a sack, and
mount the saddle of her pony in order to ford the creeks and thus
reach the isolated one-room schoolhouses to which she is bound with
her volumes. From West Union, which is enjoying free library service
for the first time, books are distributed during the school term twice
a month to a total of 53 one-room schoolhouses.

In Kentucky, WPA workers during the past two years have traveled
by horseback, muleback, rowboat and sfoot to deliver books and
magazines to more than 100,000 individuals in about 16 counties. The
small mountain schools, which are difficult to reach and are open only
from July to February, are visited regularly by the WPA carriers,
each of whom has several sub-centers to which she must travel--covering
a distance of from 45 to 60 miles.

Many boards of education and public library commissions, due to
straigned finances, have been unable either to purchase new books or
bear the total costs of reconditioning old ones which over a long period
of years have become too dilapidated for active use. For this reason
they have welcomed the Works Progress Administration bookbinding and
book-repair projects.

On projects sponsored chiefly by boards of education, Works Prog-
ress Administration workers have repaired or rebound more than
12,000,000 school books for 15,000 public schools in the country.

Through another phase of the program thousands of white collar
workers have been given remunerative employment on projects which
produce visual education aids for schools and museums. These visual
aids are designed primarily to make the world in which children live
seem less remote.
California, Kansas, Pennsylvania and New York are among the States presenting outstanding examples of the use of WPA labor by local educational agencies to produce maps, charts, three-dimensional models, projection slides, moving pictures, and other devices for bringing within a child's sensory experience those things about which he reads and studies.

Most extensive of all such activities is Pennsylvania's Museum Extension Project at Pittsburgh, where as many as 600 white collar workers at a time have found use for handicraft skills in the production of visual aids. As a result of the work performed on this project, such materials as relief maps, architectural models, costume plates, marionettes and other articles are now available to public schools (including one-room rural schools), libraries and museums in Pennsylvania.

Works Progress Administration sewing projects have become an integral part of the social welfare program in thousands of communities throughout the United States. They provide useful work for unemployed women who are the sole support of their families and at the same time provide local welfare agencies with the necessary clothing to supply the needy families for which they are responsible.

Sewing projects have operated in all the States and in nearly all counties. In a little less than a year, more than 60,000,000 garments and articles for household use were made on the sewing projects and distributed through project sponsors to tax-supported institutions and to families cared for by public relief agencies.

The Works Progress Administration workers produce a great variety of essential clothing for men, women and children. In sections where there is a surplus of wool, sheepskins, or leather, the women even produce heavy coats and jackets. Thousands of children have had
to stay away from school because of insufficiency of clothing are now able to take their place among their schoolmates with a feeling of well-being. Garments made in the Works Progress Administration sewing rooms are varied in pattern so that no one wearing them can be identified as a relief client.