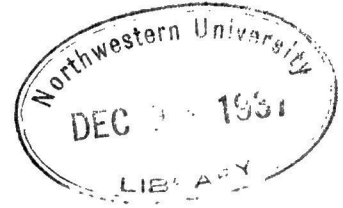


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--Works Progress Administration--



For Immediate Release,  
Tuesday, November 30, 1937.

### 1,700 WPA Workers Meet Emergency in Louisiana Cane Fields

More than 1,700 WPA workers from the New Orleans and Baton Rouge areas were at work Tuesday in Louisiana's sugar-cane fields fighting to save the State's frost-bitten \$6,000,000 bumper cane crop, and 1,000 more are awaiting the call if needed, James H. Crutcher, State WPA Administrator, reported to Deputy Administrator Aubrey Williams.

The emergency need for an unusually large number of harvest hands arose through the arrival of extremely early freezing weather. Ordinarily, cane is harvested from November until January 1, but if the crop is frozen it must be cut quickly or warm rain will cause it to thaw and ferment.

With one of the finest crops in the State's history badly frozen in the fields, Administrator Crutcher met with Governor Richard Leche, representatives of the sugar industry and employment experts. State officials arranged with the railroads for free transportation of workers to the harvest areas.

A minimum wage of \$1.50 per day in addition to complete free subsistence was agreed upon.

As a test of the willingness of WPA workers to accept this private work the situation was explained to them and they were requested to volunteer in the emergency. While units of some of the projects were temporarily closed workers were assured that they would not be removed from the WPA if they declined to go. Yet on the first day, the full demand for more

- 2 -

than 500 harvest hands was easily filled from the WPA volunteers and on the second day more than 1,500 WPA workers, over three times the number of available jobs, appeared at the employment office asking to be sent. Some of these even asked if they might go home and get relatives, in case the work was not limited to WPA people.

The wage being paid is one of the highest ever paid for this work and every possible protection as to health and working conditions is being provided by the State Board of Health and the Louisiana Federation of Labor, Mr. Crutcher said.

In releasing the Louisiana report Mr. Williams commented that "this certainly is a good example of the fact that WPA workers will jump at the chance for private work under decent conditions."

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