Continuing Problem of Unemployment Calls for Permanent Comprehensive Program of Economic Security.

Nothing less than a permanent, integrated program of insurance, public work and public assistance is needed to meet the continuing problem of unemployment relief, according to the conclusions drawn from a WPA survey of relief and security programs made public today by Administrator Harry L. Hopkins, of the Works Progress Administration.

"No single program will eliminate the distress resulting from unemployment," reads the report, transmitted to the Administrator by Corrington Gill, Assistant Administrator of WPA, in charge of all research and statistical activities. "An integrated and perfected program of insurance, public work and public assistance will be necessary.

"Under such a program, unemployment insurance would care for persons who lose their jobs for relatively short periods of time. Persons unemployed for protracted periods would receive incomes through work programs. The most important fact is that unemployment relief can no longer be regarded as a temporary problem to be treated on an emergency basis.

"In view of the underlying economic factors, the problem of unemployment must be viewed as a continuing one to be met by means of a permanent comprehensive program of economic security."
The report has been issued in the form of a pamphlet entitled, "A Survey of Relief and Security Programs", and presents the historical background of the current relief situation and the social security program and the work accomplished under them during recent years. The survey is factual and traces the development of federal aid to the unemployed as a result of the inability of political subdivisions and private agencies, to cope with the decrease in employment and the widespread economic distress following the depression of 1929.

"During the depression years," says the introduction to the survey, "the United States was confronted with a problem of insecurity of unparalleled intensity. Unemployment deprived millions of families of their source of livelihood; part-time employment provided many wage earners with incomes too meagre to support themselves and their families; declining agricultural prices and extensive droughts impoverished a large segment of the farm population; and business failures and investment losses brought many more to a state of distress. To meet this problem of poverty, the Federal Government finally embarked upon a far-reaching program of relief and unemployment.

"Since 1932 the Federal Government, in collaboration with the States and localities, has been slowly shaping a program of security to meet the needs of those who have no income or whose income is insufficient for adequate support. The financial outlays for this broad program have been large and such outlays will undoubtedly constitute a major item in future budgets."

The report outlines the growth of recent relief policies and the close interrelationships of the federal work program, the direct relief programs of the several states and the cooperative Federal-State activities under the Social Security Act. Out of the relief activities of the formative period from 1933 to 1935, it is shown, developed the more definite relief policy of 1935,
involving the liquidation of the FERA program of federal grants to the States, the establishment of a Federal Works Program and the passage of the Social Security Act. The many factors influencing the labor market and contributing to unemployment are analyzed and lead the following observation:

"The need for a varied program of assistance to the unemployed arises from the fact that many different causes and conditions lead to the loss of employment, with losses ranging from a few weeks to several years in duration. The need for a permanent program arises from the continuing nature of the problem of unemployment."

The survey is the work of Arthur E. Burns and Edward A. Williams, of the Division of Research, Statistics and Records, of the WPA, of which Emerson Ross is Director. It is supplemented with charts and tables on expenditures under the various phases of the relief program.