HOPKINS CITES RAPID TURNOVER IN PROJECT EMPLOYMENT

Less than one-sixth of the approximately 5,000,000 different persons who found jobs on WPA projects from the beginning of the program in the late summer of 1935 through November, 1937, were continuously employed by WPA, Administrator Harry L. Hopkins announced today. The majority received only temporary aid from the WPA in periods of emergency or between regular jobs in private employment.

On the basis of a study of WPA rolls from the beginning of the program in the late summer of 1935 through November 1937, it was found that a total of 4,937,286 different persons had been given WPA jobs. Of these, only 760,646 or 15.4 percent, had been continuously on the rolls from the time of WPA employment peak of 3,035,652 persons, which was attained in the last week of February, 1936, through November, 1937.

"These facts appear to controvert the assumption held in certain quarters that the unemployed regard the WPA as a 'career,'" Mr. Hopkins commented.

"The majority of those leaving the WPA did so in order to take jobs in private employment. They are encouraged to do this by the knowledge that they can return to WPA should they lose their jobs through no fault of their own.

"I have frequently emphasized -- and these figures support the contention -- that WPA workers are no different from other workers. They
want jobs in private employment. They want a chance to work and earn for themselves independently of the Federal government, and will seize the opportunity whenever it comes along."

Mr. Hopkins added that a more recent analysis of labor turnover figures indicated that even during May and June of this year, when unemployment generally was rising and WPA was enlarging its rolls, over 320,000 persons nevertheless left WPA projects. Of these, approximately 250,000 or 77 percent left voluntarily, chiefly for private employment. The remaining 23 percent are accounted for by transfers to unemployment compensation or other Social Security programs, discharges, cancellation of certification of need, or other involuntary reasons.

Of the 567,000 persons assigned to WPA projects during the same two month period, he said, well over half had never before worked for the WPA.