WPA Authorizes Employment of 35,000 to Remove Fire Hazards in Storm Area

Thirty-five thousand additional WPA workers were authorized for New England and New York today to clear away fallen timber and other debris resulting from the hurricane two weeks ago, which now constitute a serious fire hazard, Administrator Harry L. Hopkins announced today.

Mr. Hopkins said he had authorized R.C. Branion, WPA Field Representative for New England and New York, to add up to 35,000 additional men for this work at the earliest opportunity. The additional labor is necessary, he said, in order not to curtail other phases of the rehabilitation program now in progress.

Mr. Branion reported to Mr. Hopkins that a serious situation exists in all of the states swept by the hurricane by reason of the millions of fallen trees. These are not only highly inflammable, but have blocked fire lanes and trails throughout millions of acres. Should a fire start in any of these regions now, he said, it would gain almost hopeless headway before it could be checked.

The new force will work in cooperation with other state and Federal agencies with the principal object in view of restoring fire lanes, lookout towers and removal of debris or other fire hazards at the earliest possible date.