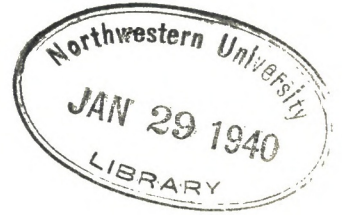


DOCUMENTS  
ROOMFEDERAL WORKS AGENCY  
WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION

For Release to Morning Newspapers  
Friday, January 26, 1940.

SURVEY OF WPA WORKERS DISMISSED UNDER 18-MONTHS RULE SHOWS  
87 PERCENT WITHOUT JOBS

More than 87 percent of the 775,000 workers dropped from WPA rolls during July and August under the 18-months dismissal clause of the current appropriation act were without jobs in November, Colonel F. C. Harrington, Commissioner of the Work Projects Administration, reported today to Representative Clifton R. Woodrum of the House Appropriations Committee.

In spite of the fact that their dismissals occurred during a period of sharply rising industrial activity, Colonel Harrington said, less than 13 out of every 100 were found to have jobs as much as three months after the layoff. Approximately half of these, he added, were earning less than the security wage they previously had earned on WPA.

The Commissioner explained that the number finding jobs was no greater, proportionately, than those who would have left the rolls of their own accord, since voluntary separations have averaged well over 100,000 a month during the last calendar year. The majority of these leave WPA, he said, to take jobs in private employment.

Effects of the 18-months rule were determined, Colonel Harrington said, through a special survey of those workers who had been dropped up to September 1. The survey also brought out that, as late as November, of the 87 out of each 100 who did not have jobs, 28 were on local relief rolls, 27 had been reassigned to WPA and 32 were without public support of any kind save what they could procure through surplus commodities.

More than three-fourths of those who had not returned to WPA in November were subsisting on incomes below their previous earnings as project workers, Colonel Harrington said. In none of the 23 cities surveyed was the average income of this group (including wages of those privately employed, relief grants, and the value of

food, fuel and clothing distribution) as much as \$14 a week, he said. In 10 of the 23 cities it was less than \$5.

More than 100,000 of all those dismissed had no income whatever in the two weeks preceding the survey.

Under a provision of the 1939 Work Relief Appropriation Act, Colonel Harrington explained, no one who had been continuously employed on WPA for more than 18 months could be retained on the rolls after September 1, and those so dismissed could not be recertified as in need of employment on WPA until after a lapse of 30 days. Dismissals in accordance with this provision between July 1 and August 31 totaled nearly one-third of the total number employed as of July 1.

To determine the effect of this policy, the WPA Division of Research conducted a survey covering approximately 138,000 workers -- about one-fifth of the total dismissed -- in 23 representative cities throughout the country. They were first interviewed about three weeks after the layoff, and those who had not been reassigned to WPA at the end of two to three months were again interviewed during November.

The study indicates that the average weekly earnings of those who had jobs when interviewed in November was \$17.22, the range being from a low of \$6 a week in Fort Worth to a high of \$28.93 in Detroit. The Detroit figure was unusual, however, because of the seasonal pickup in the automobile industry. There was a spread of \$3.41 between it and the next highest wage -- Buffalo's -- which averaged \$22.52 per week. More than one-fifth of all those employed had average weekly earnings of less than \$10.

The most critical conditions were experienced by those workers -- nearly one-third of all those dismissed -- who did not have private jobs when interviewed in November, who were not returned to WPA, and for whom no direct relief was available, Colonel Harrington observed. Forty percent of this group reported no income whatever during a period of two weeks before they were interviewed.

(The complete text of the report, including several tables, by cities, is ~~attached.~~)