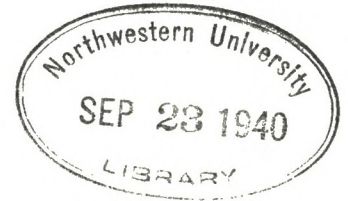


FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY
WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION

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WILLKIE CHARGES REGARDING WPA EMPLOYMENT BASELESS, HUNTER SAYS, CITING SCHEDULES GIVEN CONGRESS LAST APRIL

Employment estimates submitted to Congress last April by Colonel F. C. Harrington, Commissioner of Work Projects, and actual WPA employment since then completely refute a charge attributed to Wendell L. Willkie, Republican presidential candidate, that the rolls have been increased for political reasons, Howard O. Hunter, Acting WPA Commissioner, said today.

"The statement attributed to Mr. Willkie in press dispatches that a WPA increase in employment during July was a violation of the Hatch Act and a prediction that the WPA would increase its employment on account of the election simply is not true," Mr. Hunter said.

"As a matter of actual fact, the WPA employment decreased from June to July by approximately 100,000 persons.

"There was a drop below the authorized level of WPA employment for a very brief period about the first of July, because of the changes in operations necessary at the end of our fiscal year. This minor fluctuation had nothing to do with job authorizations and I fail utterly to see what connection it has with the Hatch Act.

"The statement by Commissioner Harrington of the WPA before the House Appropriations Committee, April 4, 1940, is clear and unmistakable as to the projected WPA employment month by month on the basis of the authorized appropriation. The whole plan was outlined on

pages 402, 712 and 713 of the House hearings. It was outlined again in the Senate hearings in May, without objection from either Democratic or Republican members of the Committee. Those plans have been followed.

"There is no question of Colonel Harrington's intention, and it was made perfectly clear that WPA employment would remain at approximately the same level for July, August and September, with a very small increase proposed for October and a further increase during the winter months provided relief needs warranted such increase. However, these proposed increases, with the single exception of a very small increase in October, would all come after the November elections.

"It is also worthy of note that WPA employment during the months of this fiscal year preceding the November election will be the smallest total employment in the same months for the past three years. It is also worthy of note that approximately one million people are at present eligible for WPA jobs but not assigned to them.

"WPA employment will be based on the factors of the amount of money made available and the number of people certified as in need in the various states, and has no connection whatever with an election or political campaign.

"Such charges always are made and we expect them, but usually they come when the heat and hysteria of campaign oratory is farther advanced. As evidence that such charges were anticipated, even though we have held employment exactly where we said we would despite a waiting list of more than a million applicants, let me quote from another statement, made by Colonel Harrington last April before the same Committee. On pages 409 and 410 of the Investigation hearings, here is the record:

"Colonel HARRINGTON. There is another election coming along

this year, in the month of November, and, if the Congress provides the appropriation which I have recommended, there will be an increase in the WPA rolls in October, and a further increase in November. That is already in my statement before the committee. I presume that it will be described in some sections of the press as being made to influence the election. I want to put in the record the fact that, if Congress makes the money available, we propose to increase employment in October and November.

MR. LUDLOW. But that will be a seasonal increase, will it not?

Colonel HARRINGTON. That is correct; yes, sir.

Mr. DITTER. Well, Colonel, since you have been so gracious to volunteer that statement, may we not with the same degree of frankness accept from you an assurance that, if these rolls are increased, they will be increased because of unemployment needs, rather than because of political expediciencies?

Colonel HARRINGTON. I would like to give you that unqualified assurance.

Mr. DITTER. That is fine.

Mr. TABER. Do you mean to tell us, colonel, that the rolls are going to go up if the appropriation goes up, regardless of the relief needs of the country in October, November, and December?

Colonel HARRINGTON. It comes pretty near being a distortion of what I said.

Mr. TABER. I would like to have that on the record. You told us a little while ago that, if we increased the appropriation, we could count on the rolls going up. I am asking you the question, are they going up regardless of the relief needs of the country at the time?

Colonel HARRINGTON. The answer is "No."