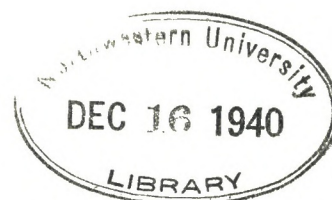


FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY  
WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION

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## WPA PRODUCING 2,000,000 TOYS FOR CHRISTMAS

Some two million dolls, trains, scooters and other playthings to bring cheer to childish hearts will go out from WPA workshops between now and Christmas for free distribution to homes which might otherwise be missed in Saint Nicholas' annual pilgrimage.

In nearly every large community in the land, according to Mrs. Florence Kerr, Assistant WPA Commissioner in charge of professional and service projects, workers on toy-making projects are busily repairing, repainting and refurbishing broken and cast-off toys by the truckloads. These, in most cases, have been accumulated throughout the year through donations from women's clubs, parent teacher groups and similar organizations.

There are many expert craftsmen among the WPA toy makers, Mrs. Kerr declares. Men who have devoted their lives to carpentry and cabinet making but are now unable to find private employment are adept at repairing doll furniture and fitting new parts to mechanical toys. Unemployed girls and women turn their sewing talents to doll dresses and miniature layettes. Others with paint and brush add bright new colors to conceal the years of wear and tear that many toys have undergone before they are turned over to WPA. As Christmas Day approaches, their workshops are piled ceiling high with a glittering variety of fun-makers.

WPA sewing rooms are a particularly rich source of supply for Christmas toys. Throughout the year scraps of brightly colored cloth, and cotton and other material that can be used as stuffing, are hoarded. In the weeks before the holiday much of the production in these sewing rooms is shifted to rag dolls, calico cats and other grotesque and amusing playthings. The inventiveness and ingenuity of the workers are given free reign at this time, Mrs. Kerr explains, with the result that wildlife species that would be rarities in any zoo have often been simulated in cotton batting and chintz.

"Because of the splendid cooperation we receive from the local sponsors of these toy projects the WPA has been able to contribute something toward a 'Happy Christmas' for more and more families each year," Mrs. Kerr declares. "Chambers of commerce, church and patriotic groups, social agencies all are becoming more generous in their contributions. The Junior League in a western city has annually turned over nearly \$600 to the local WPA toy project for the last several years.

"Reports from our field workers lead me to believe that this year we may be able to produce as many as 2,000,000 toys. If this is true, we can be sure that not many homes in the United States will have to undergo an absolutely giftless Christmas in 1940."

Many toy projects are operated on a year around basis, Mrs. Kerr explains. Some of these simply accumulate their production against the usual Christmas rush while others supply full-time toy-lending projects. These operate in much the same way as circulating libraries, allowing children to borrow a particular toy for a specified period

of time, after which it must be returned. If the toy is returned promptly and in good condition, the borrower is allowed to select another. In addition to affording a varied supply of playthings for children unable to buy them, Mrs. Kerr points out, the rules of the project instill a sense of thrift and thoughtfulness in the minds of the young borrowers.

In several communities, she continued, the toy projects have furnished valuable assistance to children's hospitals through the production of special orthopedic toys. These are so constructed as to require certain muscular operations--the squeezing of an air bulb or the manipulation of cords--to make the toys move. In this way, corrective exercises are disguised as play with the result that recovery from bone fractures and muscular paralyses are speeded.

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