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WPA SALVAGES 6,600 TONS OF STREETCAR RAILS IN MONTH; NEW PLAN EXPECTED TO BOOST RATE

More than 6,600 tons of abandoned streetcar rails, containing scrap steel equivalent to the amount required for four modern destroyers or 325 medium tanks, were removed from city streets by WPA workers during March, F. H. Dryden, Acting Commissioner of Work Projects, said today.

He noted that WPA has been removing old streetcar rails throughout its program--in growing amounts since last fall--and announced a new arrangement with the War Production Board which is expected to increase the rate still further.

The plan involves adaptation of the nation-wide WPA salvage collection project, sponsored by the WPB's Bureau of Industrial Conservation, to rail removal from city streets. Car rails are considered an important type of steel scrap because they can be formed easily into other articles.

Rails must be publicly-owned and not subject to franchise obligations on the part of a transit company to be eligible for removal by the WPA. It is possible, under WPB sponsorship, for WPA workers to extract track where title is acquired by the WPB or other public agency designated by it, local governments give permission for the removal, and resurfacing of the track strip is limited to temporary repairs.

Removal of abandoned streetcar rails for their vitally-needed steel is being facilitated by various other means. Recognizing that the value of steel is no longer measured alone in monetary terms, the WPA will now accept certain "marginal" projects in which the cost of removal was not previously considered to be justified by the value of the salvaged rails.

The War Department has certified scrap collection, including rail removal, as of military importance, thus permitting the WPA to expedite the work on the same basis as other defense projects. Several WPA employees have been assigned to each field office of the Bureau of Industrial Conservation to assist in developing salvage projects of any sort in which the WPA may participate.

Mr. Dryden emphasized that regular locally-sponsored street projects will continue to be used for the removal of abandoned streetcar rails whenever they are suitable. Under these projects, the local government must submit a certificate that the rails are publicly-owned. The salvage is shipped to assembly points, furnaces or mills designated by the WPB, and the sponsor receives the proceeds to apply toward the cost of the project.

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