

AT THE WHITE HOUSE DOOR: THREE WORK-RELIEF AIDES



Times Wide World. Secretary of the Interior Ickes. Harris & Ewing. Under-Secretary of Agriculture Tugwell. International. FERA Administrator Hopkins.

VAST DRIVE 'TO END RELIEF' GETS UNDER WAY

WASHINGTON, April 12.—The most gigantic peace-time mobilization of labor in history got under way this week as President Roosevelt, with nearly \$5,000,000,000 at his command, took the first steps toward ending what he has called "this business of relief."

Until the President signed the Congressional joint resolution making this huge sum available the Federal Government had met more than three-quarters of the cost of caring for the destitute unemployed (in some States nearly the whole cost) by two methods: direct or home relief and work relief. Five million unemployed, representing at least 20,500,000 individuals, had benefited.

Now, if the announced new Federal policy is carried out, the national government will return to the States and local communities the responsibility for caring for an estimated total of 1,500,000 unemployables—the sick, the crippled and the aged—and will provide work at something better than relief allowances for the remaining 3,500,000 who are held to be fit for it.

Speed in Spending.

The new fund will be thrown into the labor and materials market with the utmost possible speed. The President himself has stated that the peak of spending may be reached in November and that the hope is to do the bulk of the spending between that time and July 1, 1936. That many jobs cannot possibly be finished in that time is evident. The program calls for immediate concentration on those which can be finished.

The new works program is manifestly a development out of former works programs undertaken by the national, State and local governments. It bears a particular resemblance to the Civil Works Administration, set up in November, 1933, with the avowed object of putting 4,000,000 men—half of them on the relief rolls—to work.

There is, however, a difference. Much of the so-called work relief was futile or purely temporary in its effects. Much of it, to be sure, was well planned and worth while. But the new program represents an effort to merge two heretofore separate methods of dealing with unemployment: relief and re-employment through public works. Relief as such is due nominally to disappear in this merger, but actually the relief experience of the FERA is bound to have weight beside the public works experience of the PWA.

Abandonment of CWA.

The CWA had to be abandoned, after less than five months of operation, because the allotted funds had run out. It had been conceived as a kind of bridge which would carry employment until the \$3,300,000,000 public works program, plus the hoped-for natural tendency toward recovery, had got into full operation.

The bridge was too short. The new works program is conceived as a longer and stronger bridge, over which the army of relief and the army of permanent and planned public improvements are expected to march side by side. They have

With Fund of Five Billions, President Seeks to Clear the Way to Recovery

become, in the Rooseveltian theory, a single army.

Into the plan of campaign there enter several elements which must be reconciled. First, there is the emphasis which Secretary Ickes has put on sound and careful planning, even at the expense of delaying actual operations. The reports and the detailed planning work of the Mississippi Valley Committee and the National Resources Board have gone far toward completing the preliminary spade work. Into this picture there naturally enters Rexford G. Tugwell, Under-Secretary of Agriculture, who is known to those who have read his books as a fervent exponent of fundamental planning.

Second, there is the insistence of Relief Administrator Harry L. Hopkins on immediate re-employment. Hopkins is no enemy of planning. But for nearly two years he has stoutly expounded the principle that men out of work through no fault

of our present relief activities and the substitution of a national chart for the giving of work."

But whatever the new name given, the new system will obviously grow out of the old, and the coordination required, broadly speaking, will be that between the ideas of Secretary Ickes and those of Administrator Hopkins.

Divisions of the Fund.

The allotments specified in the joint resolution tell in broad outline the story of the new program. An examination of the list shows that there are some parts of the program which can be entered upon with little delay, others which will take longer, still others which must be viewed as merely the beginnings of a long-term undertaking.

Some highway work, for instance, can start almost immediately. The PWA has thousands of applications on which it can act with little delay. On the other

housing appropriation of \$450,000,000, under the joint resolution, would go in large part to the Emergency Housing Corporation, which forms a part of the housing division of the PWA. The EHC has achieved relatively little in the way of actual construction, cooperating with non-profit groups and organizations, but its experience with the attendant legal, financial and engineering difficulties may enable it to move more rapidly in the future. Funds may also be allocated—though the legality of this step has been questioned—to the Federal Subsistence Homesteads Corporation, a lending agency which has already made possible the building of several new communities for part-time farmers.

It is not pretended that \$450,000,000, however spent, will meet the housing needs of the American people. But this sum, thrown into the construction industry without too much delay, will furnish much needed employment, both direct and indirect.

Great Public Works.

The \$500,000,000 set aside for rural rehabilitation, and the use and control of water, and the \$100,000,000 allocated for rural electrification will probably be devoted to carrying out some of the immediate recommendations of the Mississippi Valley Committee and the National Resources Board.

These recommendations are majestic in their sweep, involving as they do the prevention of floods, water conservation, power, the protection of watersheds, studies of the proper uses of land, and efforts to improve living and working conditions in rural communities throughout the country. They include also the purposes for which an additional \$350,000,000 has been earmarked—sewage disposal, sanitation, and the prevention of erosion.

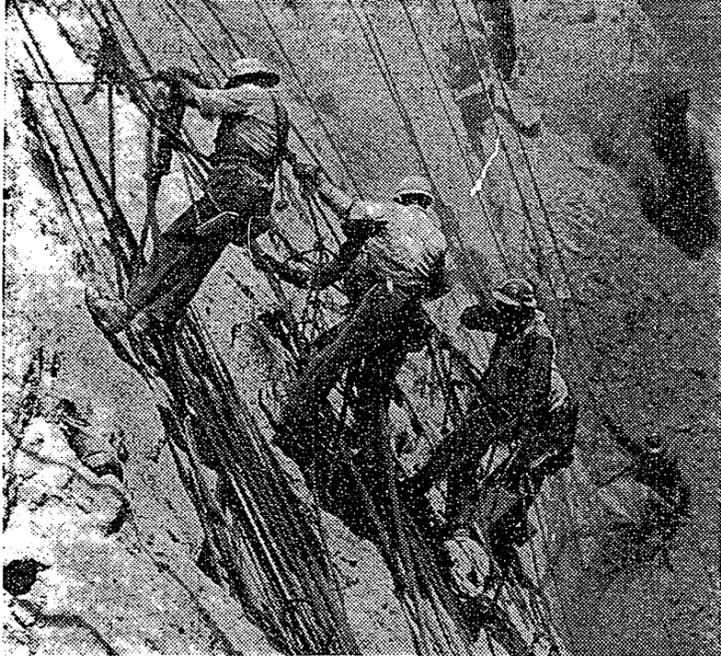
The largest single item allocated in the joint resolution was the \$900,000,000 set aside for "loans or grants for public projects of States and Territories and the District of Columbia, or political subdivisions and agencies thereof"—a description which threw it logically into the PWA basket.

New Applications.

Although the PWA's original funds had all been allocated some months ago, more than 100,000 new applications have been received. The difficulty will lie in selecting among the applications and in expediting work on those accepted. It is pointed out at PWA headquarters that many of the original causes of delay in getting such projects into operation have been removed. State laws have been amended to facilitate the early legal steps, a financial and engineering procedure has been worked out, and Secretary Ickes last week announced that operations in the future would be decentralized through effective State PWA agencies.

It is probable, therefore, that the new public works funds can be translated into jobs and purchases much more expeditiously than were the earlier ones. To a degree the national government, the States and the local communities have learned by hard experience, and in learning have trained corps of experts who will not repeat the early mistakes.

BLASTING FOR PWA



of their own should not be humiliated by being treated as objects of charity.

"Straight relief, direct relief, the dole or whatever you want to call it," Mr. Hopkins declares, "maintain life, not at a subsistence level but at the level of deterioration."

The new stress on long-time planning may be due to Secretary Ickes or to Vice-Chairman Frederic A. Delano of the National Resources Board, but when the President urged jobs in place of the dole he spoke with the voice of Harry Hopkins.

At what jobs can men (and women, too, in many cases) be set to work with the least possible delay? Even in the absence of the announcement of a complete and detailed program we can make a good guess. Experts and technicians will be needed for planning; thousands of "white-collar people" for the clerical work; skilled labor for surveying, housing and construction jobs; unskilled labor on roads, sewer projects and erosion-control projects.

Short Trips to Work.

An effort will be made to locate the jobs near centres of population—this much is evident from the President's statement that a thirty-mile bus ride should mark the limit of the gap between the worker and his work.

The President has indicated that existing agencies will be utilized. It is natural that they should be, for even those brought into being by the emergency have between one and two years of experience—a time-saving element—behind them.

The policy does not precisely jibe with that laid out by Mr. Roosevelt in his relief message sent to Congress at the opening of the present session.

"With the establishment of the new system," he then declared, "we can supersede the FERA with a coordinated authority which will be charged with the orderly liquidation

hand, spade work on rural electrification, flood-control and power dams or large-scale housing must wait the completion of legal, financial and engineering preliminaries.

We can, however, line up the elements of the program somewhat in the order in which they can be carried out.

Reduction of Dole-Giving.

First will come the "tapering off" of Federal relief. A total of \$880,000,000 is available for this purpose, though if the works schedule goes ahead fast enough not all of it may be used.

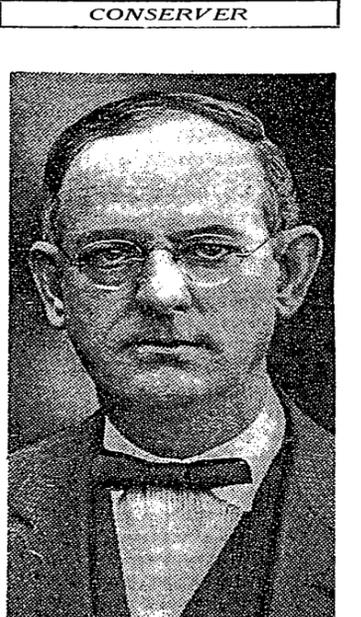
Next will come the CCC camps, which with the new appropriation of \$600,000,000 will be increased in number from 1,468 to 2,916, with the enrolled membership swelling from 300,000 to 600,000 young men. This can be accomplished, Director Fechner said on Friday, in about sixty days.

The \$800,000,000 allocated to highways, roads, streets and grade-crossing elimination, with a resulting heavy demand for labor, might be expected to be the next large section of the fund to be brought into action.

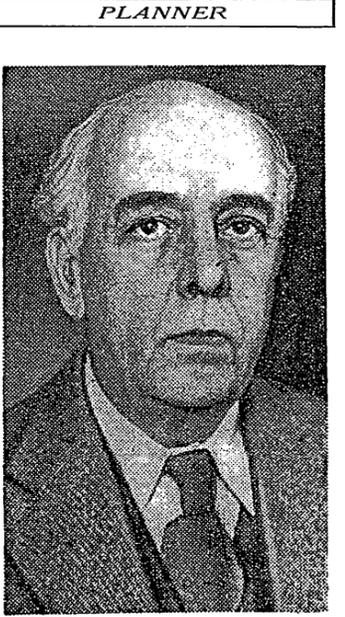
The work of eliminating grade crossings will be pushed. The President announced Friday that \$200,000,000 would be spent for this purpose before July 1, 1936, a large part of the amount in cities.

The so-called white-collar projects, for which \$300,000,000 has been allocated, may also require a relatively short time to set up. These projects may involve research, surveys and education. They do not call for the preliminary assemblage of raw materials. They may, in fact, serve as preliminary steps to large-scale undertakings, just as the real property inventory of New York City, made last year by work relief, promises to be useful as a guide in future slum-clearance and housing enterprises.

Early reports indicated that the



Associated Press. Robert Fechner, director of the Civilian Conservation Corps.



Associated Press. Frederic A. Delano, vice chairman of National Resources Board.