

PATHFINDER

March 13, 1937: p. 5

WPA, Governors

At its height, on Feb, 29, 1936, WPA employment stood at 3,039,000. By last week, the figure had moved down to about 2,100,000, with prospects of a further progressive reduction to 1,600,000 by June.

As relief costs began to increase for states and localities and as the possibility loomed of still greater burdens if private employment did not keep pace with the paring of the WPA rolls, Governors of six states met at the home of Governor Herbert H. Lehman of New York. Present in addition to Lehman were Governors Elmer Benson of Minnesota, Henry Horner of Illinois, Charles F. Hurley of Massachusetts, Phillip F. La Follette of Wisconsin and Robert E. Quinn of Rhode Island. Although they were known to be in sympathy with aims of the conference, Governor Murphy of Michigan and Governor Earle of Pennsylvania were unable to attend, the former because he was resting in Florida, the latter because of hurts received in an automobile accident.

Following their conference the six Governors outlined their attitude in a telegram to the President. They said the cost of relief could not be borne by local governments; that the Federal government should offer work relief to all needy employables; and that WPA workers should not be dropped from the rolls until they could be absorbed in private industry.

A meeting with the President for discussion of these points was asked by the Governors. The President agreed almost immediately and the conferees were preparing to meet at the end of the week.