

MINNESOTA RADIO TAPE OF FEB. 19, 1964
FOR BROADCAST WEEK OF FEB. 23, 1964

Ladies and gentlemen - -

This is Senator Hubert Humphrey, reporting to you from my office on Capitol Hill in Washington . . .

Today I would like to give a brief report on the Accelerated Public Works program as it has been affecting Minnesota. I have been a strong supporter of this program. I testified recently on behalf of legislation to extend it and support it with greater funds and will continue to work vigorously for this.

The public works acceleration program has two principal purposes:

1. To provide immediate useful work for the unemployed in areas that have been hard-hit economically.

2. To help these areas to become more attractive to industrial and commercial development through the improvement of their public facilities.

Accelerated Public Works is not a work relief program, but its projects must contribute substantially to the reduction of local unemployment. The projects are designed to create jobs for the unemployed, but they also serve an essential public need.

The program has been in operation just a little more than a year. In that time Minnesota has received approximately \$14 million in Accelerated Public Works funds. The various projects have produced well over 10,000 man-months of work in Minnesota's distressed counties. More than 225 projects have been approved in Minnesota. Some of them have met the primary health needs of our people - water systems, nursing homes, sewage treatment facilities. Others have helped develop our natural resources. Still others have provided necessary community facilities.

Of course we have a backlog of applications totalling millions which have not been committed to action because the Federal funds have all been obligated. There would be more applications if communities had not realized that present appropriations had been used up, and so did not make their applications.

It is important to note that most of these projects are financed on a 50-50 basis, so that there is no question about local effort and commitment to the program.

Nor is there any question about the need. Let me share with you a letter I received a while ago from a farmer in one of our northern Minnesota counties, Beltrami County. It is more eloquent than any words of mine could be on what Accelerated Public Works programs can mean. This county by the way is one which has had serious economic problems for years, where some towns have 20-30% unemployed, where men have been without work for not simply weeks or months, but literally for years, where the relief and welfare costs have grown larger and larger. This farmer writes: "During the winter months I have, as most people north of Bemidji, cut pulpwood for a living. The last two years we have had a very poor market for our timber. Last Winter I was able to work on an APW project in the Chippewa National Forest. We have been doing jobs which are a big help to the forests.

"The money earned is all spent locally. The local merchants feel the effect of the extra cash in the area. The men are all energetic about their work and appreciate the job very much.

"When I am at work I often wonder if you folks who have sponsored these jobs ever realize how much they are appreciated by us and how much it means to our families."

Another letter of several weeks ago refers to a street-lighting project in the Village of Coleraine. It reads: "Thank you for your courtesy and cooperation in the past in helping to complete the application . . . this is a project that would and could not have been accomplished without your aid.

"Our area is still troubled with high unemployment and this project will be of untold value in assisting men here who need work and desire to work without losing their dignity by accepting charity or welfare.

"We here on the Iron Range of Minnesota certainly appreciate your efforts and the efforts of our Senators and Congressman who have promoted this legislation."

The Accelerated Public Works program has more than proved its value. A basic pick-up of our economy needs the stimulus of the Tax Cut we recently passed and upon which I reported to you last week. Yet for some time to come we need also a continued and expanded Accelerated Public Works program and I am pressing strongly for current proposed legislation to do just that.

Thank you.

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