

# War Manpower Commission Program for Increase of Production of Strategic Mica in North Carolina

FOR A FURTHER EXPLANATION OF THIS PROGRAM, GO TO THE NEAREST LOCAL OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES EMPLOYMENT SERVICE OF THE WAR MANPOWER COMMISSION.

September 25, 1943.

Recognizing the extreme importance of strategic mica in the furtherance of the war effort, and recognizing that the greater part of the available supply of domestic mica is located in North Carolina, representatives of the following agencies or organizations have adopted the program set forth below, to be carried out by them jointly, for the increased productivity of strategic mica:

**United States Government:** War Manpower Commission; Colonial Mica Corporation; War Production Board; War Labor Board, Selective Service System; Labor Branch, 4th Service Command, United States Army; Office of Price Administration.

**Private Industry:** Mayland Mining and Milling Association.

Much has already been done to improve conditions and to increase production. These are a few of the steps which have been taken:

(1) Organization, by the War Production Board, and Metals Reserve Co., of the Colonial Mica Corporation, an agency of the U.S. Government. Colonial Mica was set up to act as purchasing agent of strategic mica for the government, and to encourage production by arranging for loans repayable out of the proceeds of the mine; to facilitate the securing of necessary equipment and priorities for its lease or purchase; and to further assist mica mine operators in operation.

(2) This and other organizations have made efforts which have resulted in the simplification of procedures for pre-employment physical examinations required for insurance purposes; securing rubber boots and other small equipment for workers; encouraging the occupational deferment of mica workers; and obtaining a substantial increase in the price paid for mica.

The following additional action will become effective in the State of North Carolina at 12:00 noon, on Oct. 1, 1943:

(1) Designation of all Surface and Underground Mica Operations as "Critical Occupations."

All surface and underground mica mining and processing operations shall hereafter be considered as "critical occupations", under the policies and procedures governing the operation of the War Manpower Commission in the State of North Carolina. No person may be hired by any employer for work in the mica industry except through the nearest office of the United States Employment Service of the War Manpower Commission. Full records of all hires and discharges will be maintained for each employer in that office.

However, it is recognized that this would work a hardship on certain employers whose operations are located some distance from the nearest local office of the United States Employment Service. Therefore, special arrangements may be made by an operator with the manager of the United States Employment Service local office, with the approval of the Area Director for the War Manpower Commission for permission to make hires, in conformity with the rules, regulations, and policies of the War Manpower Commission as set out herein and elsewhere. This permission will be conditioned on an immediate report of hires by the operator to the manager of the United States Employment Service local office.

Any employer found by the local office of the United States Employment Service to be willfully violating this regulation will be declared non-conforming, and his workers will be recruited for employment in other mica operations.

2. Classification of Mica Mines, in order of Productivity, by War Production Board.

It is recognized that there is not enough available manpower to fully exploit the mica ore bodies in the State, and that in spite of the most extreme efforts the production of domestic mica will fall far short of meeting requirements. Therefore, workers must be urged to accept employment in those mines having the highest productivity per worker. In order to achieve this aim, the War Production Board has extended its Minerals Classification List to include mica, and has designated this a critical mineral. Each of 1,059 mica mines now known to be in operation or in development in the United States has been classified in one of three groups, ranging from the most productive to the least productive, and based on dollar value of production per worker employed, regardless of the size of the operation. Thus a mine having high productivity of strategic mica and employing only a few workers might be listed in Class I; whereas another mine, employing many workers but producing a relatively smaller amount of strategic mica, would be in Class II; and a mine having low productivity per worker would be in Class III.

The first list, dated October 1, includes 65 mines in Class I; and 53 mines in Class II, along with all the 163 mines in

process of development, and certain rifting and trimming shops. All other operations are in Class III.

These lists will be revised each month, for the time being, to meet changing conditions, and will be furnished to all local offices of the United States Employment Service of the War Manpower Commission, as well as to all local boards of the Selective Service System in mica-producing counties, and to other interested governmental agencies.

#### USES—

(1) By the United States Employment Service of the War Manpower Commission:

Available workers will be urged to accept employment in mines included in Class I, before being offered jobs in Class II operations; and in Class II before Class III. Only in exceptional circumstances will a worker be referred to a job in a Class III operation, if there are labor shortages in Class I or Class II operations in the area. If, however, a worker has good reason for accepting employment only in a Class III mine, he will be so referred, rather than to deny him an opportunity to work in the mica industry.

In exceptional cases, upon the recommendation of an authorized representative of the War Production Board, the Area Director of the War Manpower Commission may authorize referral of workers to a mine or mines in Class III, where such referrals would enable the operator to increase productivity to the point of qualifying for Class I or II.

Only in the most exceptional cases of extreme personal hardship will a worker be given a statement of availability to transfer from a Class I or II operation to a Class III operation.

(2) Selective Service System:

Selective Service local boards in mica-producing counties are being instructed to consult the local office of the United States Employment Service of the War Manpower Commission before reclassifying any worker employed in mica mining regardless of skill, and any worker employed as a mica sheeter.

The United States Employment Service of the War Manpower Commission will recommend consideration for deferment for all workers in Class I and II operations. When the name of a worker employed in a Class III operation is referred to the local board to the United States Employment Service, it will review the needs of Class I and II operations within the area, and will offer the worker employment in such an operation, where he is needed. If after 30 days the worker has failed to make a transfer, when he could do so without undue hardship to himself or to his dependents, he will not be given consideration for occupational deferment.

If, however, there are no Class I or II operations in the local office area, or if such operations have no labor needs, the local office of the United States Employment Service of the War Manpower Commission will recommend consideration for deferment for workers in Class III operations.

The determination of "undue personal hardship" will be made by the War Manpower Commission Area Director, after a full investigation of all facts by the local office of the United States Employment Service of the War Manpower Commission, and will be reviewed by the Selective Service local board.

(3) Forty-Eight Hour Week:

In order to expedite the production of strategic mica and to reduce labor requirements by insuring maximum utilization of workers in this industry, the War Manpower Director for Region IV, which includes North Carolina, has declared that on and after October 1, 1943, all mica mining, including developmental work and milling, but excluding the sheeting, trimming, and grading of "sheet" mica, shall operate on a wartime work week of not less than 48 hours. If an exception is necessary, application should be filed with the War Manpower Commission State Director before October 1, through the nearest local office of the United States Employment Service of the War Manpower Commission.

This order does not require the extension of the work-week of individuals who, on account of other employment or physical limitations, are not available for full-time work. However, notice of the employment of such part-time or physically handicapped workers should be filed with the nearest local office of the United States Employment Service before October 1, or as soon thereafter as possible.

It should be noted that workers must be paid time-and-a-half for all hours worked in excess of forty in any work week.

(4) Wages:

(a) The War Manpower Commission has directed the local offices of the United States Employment Service of the War Manpower Commission to give a statement of availability, upon request, to any mica worker who can show that he is being paid less than 40¢ per hour, on the grounds of sub-standard wages.

(b) A committee representing all interested groups is being appointed to study the wage rates paid in the mica industry, and to recommend a plan for action, to be presented to the War Labor Board for its approval. It is impossible to recruit or hold a sufficient number of workers in the mica industry under the present wage scale, since prevailing wages in competing less critical industries in the area are much higher. Therefore, operators are urged to cooperate with this committee and to assist in developing a plan for the payment of wages at a rate which will encourage increased production, and to cut down absenteeism and turnover.

It is believed that development of a plan for the payment of a bonus each week to workers who have worked a full 48-hour week without any absenteeism would result in greatly increased productivity, and would reduce the number of workers needed to keep the mine going at top production. Operators should give consideration to this suggestion, and should discuss it further with state representatives of the War Labor Board.

(5) Curtailment of Mining and Processing of Less-essential Minerals in Mica-producing Areas:

While it is important, the production of feldspar is far less critical now than the production of strategic mica. Therefore, the War Production Board is urging all feldspar operators located in mica-producing areas to undertake the mining of strategic mica, and to curtail present operations in feldspar.

Feldspar operators who are not willing or able to undertake the production of strategic mica have been advised by the War Production Board to allow the recruitment of their workers by the United States Employment Service of the War Manpower Commission for employment in the production of strategic mica.

Through their National Association, the feldspar operators in Western North Carolina have assured the War Production Board that they will do everything possible to cooperate in increasing the production of strategic mica. In view of this assurance it is believed that no further action will be necessary.

(6) Appeals:

(a) An appeal may be made from any decision of the War Manpower Commission under this program to the War Manpower Commission Management-Labor Committee for the State of North Carolina.

(b) An appeal may be filed with the Selective Service Area Appeals Board from the decision of any local Selective Service board.

(7) Employment of Prisoners-of-War:

An extensive investigation has resulted in the conclusion that, because of the nature of the operations, prisoners-of-war cannot be utilized satisfactorily to relieve the manpower shortage in the mica industry.

(8) Information Campaign:

The Colonial Mica Corporation has planned and is now putting into operation an extensive program to inform mica workers and the general public of the part which mica is playing in winning the war, and of its extreme importance. This will include efforts to reduce absenteeism and turnover among workers, by showing them the essentiality of their job on the home front. Without mica, no plane can fly—no radio can operate.

Every operator is urged to give his full support to this morale-building campaign, and to help by notifying workers and members of the general public of the details of the program as soon as he is informed by the representative of the Colonial Mica Corporation.

(9) Additional Help to Operators:

While this industry is small in comparison to other industries, there is nothing more necessary than increased production of strategic mica, if we are to win the war. The Colonial Mica Corporation, a subsidiary of Metals Reserve Company, is the representative of the United States Government, established to help in every way possible to effect this increase. The representatives of all other governmental agencies in mica-producing areas are at the service of mica operators. You are urged to call on them for advice and help.

This reprint of an order and regulation issued by government agencies, is inserted by the undersigned in support of the government program FOR INCREASED MICA PRODUCTION FOR WAR REQUIREMENTS.

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