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DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND  
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**VARIOUS**

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Vol. 1.

No. 6.

# MONTHLY BULLETIN

OF THE

PENNSYLVANIA

## Department of Labor and Industry

JOHN PRICE JACKSON, *Commissioner*



A BULLETIN OF INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

NOVEMBER, 1914

HARRISBURG, PA.  
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1914

PERSONNEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
AND INDUSTRY.

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The Commissioner, who has charge and direction of the Department, is John Price Jackson.

The Industrial Board consists of:

George S. Comstock, Mechanicsburg; James C. Cronin, Philadelphia; John P. Wood, Philadelphia; Mrs. Samuel Semple, Titusville; John Price Jackson, Chairman, and Louis A. Irwin, Secretary of the Board.

The Chief of the Bureau of Inspection is Lew R. Palmer, who is assisted by the members of the Division of Industrial Hygiene given below; W. H. Blakeslee, Medical Inspector; Elizabeth B. Bricker, Medical Inspector; Jacob Lightner, Supervising Inspector for Philadelphia; Francis Feehan, Supervising Inspector for Pittsburgh; district inspectors, etc.

The Division of Industrial Hygiene and Engineering consists of John C. Price, Chief of the Division and Chief Medical Inspector; John H. Walker, Civil Engineer and fire prevention expert; Richard M. Pennock, Mechanical Engineer and expert in heating and ventilation; John S. Spicer, Chemical Engineer. The Commissioner and Chief Inspector are members ex officio of this Board.

The Chief of the Bureau of Statistics and Information is Alfred R. Houck, who is assisted by Wilson I. Fleming, Assistant Chief; W. H. Horner, Statistician; Collectors of Statistics, clerks, etc.

Richard M. Pennock is Chief of the Division of Accident Reports.

H. H. Wheaton is Chief of the Division of Immigrant Investigation. This Division is attached to the Bureau of Statistics and Information.

A permanent Chief has not yet been appointed for the Bureau of Arbitration and Mediation. The Acting Chief, F. P. Vincent, is assisted by members of the Department.

The Attorney for the Department is Richard W. Williamson, assisted by Howard Benton Lewis.

James A. Steese is Chief Clerk and has associated with him book-keepers and stenographers.

Publications are under the general direction of the Division of Hygiene with John S. Spicer acting as Editor.

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REPORT OF THE SECOND ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE  
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT OF-  
FICES.

MRS. SAMUEL SEMPLE, Pennsylvania Industrial Board.

Upon invitation of the Governor of Indiana, the annual meeting of the American Association of Public Employment Offices was held in the Chamber of the House of Representatives in the Capitol, in Indianapolis, September 24th and 25th, 1914. The President, Mr. F. C. Croxton, of Ohio; the Vice-President, Mr. Joseph V. Cunningham, of Michigan, and the Secretary-Treasurer, Mr. William M. Leiserson, of Wisconsin, were present and in service. Eleven states, the District of Columbia, and the Dominion of Canada reported at the opening session, and other delegates arrived later. At no session did the attendance number over fifty; but probably twice that number were included in the total registration. The importance of the gathering was not measured by its size; for it represented one of the early stages of an attempt to consider and handle the great problem of unemployment from a national standpoint. The intrinsic importance of the occasion was recognized by Governor Ralston of Indiana, who appeared in person, and welcomed the convention in gracious and humorous words, which closed with serious tribute to the work in hand.

The opening session was devoted to the presentation of reports from delegates on labor conditions in their own States or cities. The territory covered ran from Massachusetts to Oklahoma, but most fully represented the Northern Central states and Middle West. Massachusetts was reported as having comparatively little unemployment; and in Oklahoma the situation was depicted as almost ideal, except in the oil fields, where conditions are unsettled, though so recently as to have caused very little suffering as yet. With these two exceptions, the conditions described in the other states were alike—many out of employment; mills and factories running on reduced time; railroad construction lessened, and train service cut; building trades much reduced; shipping at a standstill, with consequent demoralization of employment for longshoremen. A certain degree of adjustment to present conditions was indicated in the fairly general statement that a slight betterment had set in. Interesting exceptions to the general gloom were the facts that the demands for domestic help still outrun the supply and that, to escape the derangement of the trades, the movement is "back to the

farm." This movement has, in some cases, been practically created by the public employment agencies; and in all cases they have fostered it, though faced by the difficulty of low wages, and often poor living conditions, on the farms. Wherever an attempt had been made to handle farm labor the feeling was strong that the first need is to educate the farm employer to care for his men more adequately, and to pay a better wage. If this could be done it would, from the employment agency side reduce the situation to sending farm men back to the farms, or inducing foreigners coming from agricultural life abroad to go to farms in this country rather than to remain in the cities where they land. In parts of Ohio the wages for summer farm labor were reported as \$1.25 to \$1.50 per day, sometimes with, and sometimes without board; during corn harvest the price was six cents per shock, without board; and all-the-year labor was offered \$16.00 to \$18.00 per month. At this price it is difficult to supply farm labor. It was stated that the present demand is for \$20.00 to \$25.00 per month; while in Wisconsin it was reported that the endeavor is to push wages to \$30.00 to \$40.00 per month, with board. Wisconsin plans to add to its state officials a Superintendent of Farm Employment. Missouri reported systematic attention to farm employment. In the month of June of this year ninety per cent of the 13,000 positions secured by public employment offices of that state for applicants were on farms. The Missouri Department of Labor co-operates with the State Board of Agriculture in this work. In many ways the most remarkable story of the convention was that told by W. G. Ashton, Assistant Commissioner of Labor of Oklahoma, concerning the work done by his department in organizing the farm labor market in his state. Representatives of the Department make a survey of the labor needs of the rural districts as harvest time approaches, securing estimates from the farmers themselves in each county of the number of laborers they will need; and the department gathers those laborers within and without the state, seeing that they are delivered to their destinations by the time the wheat harvest opens. As a rule, the farmers are glad to have them arrive in advance, that they may help with the hay, or with other farm work that presses. The preliminary time is paid for at ordinary farm wages, while special prices prevail for the wheat harvest itself. So handled, the great army of harvesters, 20,000 in Oklahoma, move northward with the harvest, to make part of the 40,000 needed in Kansas, and of the 60,000 which handle the wheat in the Dakotas. While several of the delegates advocated systems of bulletins, similar to those of the weather bureau, for securing the supply of labor needed, Mr. Ashton opposed this, as too slow and too uncertain, owing to the frequent failure to remove bulletins

when they have served their purpose. His preference is for use of the press, in general statement, and in up-to-date advertising. His view is that co-operation between states of like agricultural interests is necessary to complete organization of the farm labor market. Mr. Ashton was also most emphatic that it is the duty of State Departments of Labor to undertake this work of organization of the farm labor market. Only so, at present, can the agricultural needs be met fully. Moreover, if such organization is left—as in most states it is—to the railroads and to private agencies, the farm help secured is largely of inferior quality; and the farmer secures even that at the cost to society of the manufacture of tramps, hoboes, and bums, plus the innumerable accidents which result from stolen railway transportation. Mr. Ashton advocates the employment by States of special field agents to keep watch upon the needs of the rural labor market.

In the urban industrial fields an interesting unanimity of expectation of a bad winter was manifested. Wisconsin, through its Industrial Commissioner, Mr. Beck, reported a tendency in that state to protect labor by effecting economies first in the managerial department of large concerns. Many firms are cutting large salaries as much as thirty per cent, clerical salaries about fifteen per cent, leaving labor wages practically untouched. Several cities reported municipal work undertaken at this time with a view to relieving labor conditions, resident men with families being given first privilege of registering for such employment. The most complete system of this sort was apparently that instituted in Toronto as an emergency measure necessitated by Canadian connection with the European War. A Citizen's Committee, co-operating with the city and federal governments raised a fund of \$1,000,000 for employment relief work. Winnipeg and Alberta have already followed the example of Toronto. The work done has been so satisfactory, and such a benefit to the city that at the coming session of the Canadian Parliament it is expected that legislation will be enacted that will put the system on a permanent basis, and extend it to the whole Dominion, with a clearing house at Ottawa. The attitude throughout is that this is government work, and in no sense charity. The general scheme is modelled after the English plan with adaptation to Canadian conditions.

The general impression created by the reports was that economic pressure is at present felt most keenly in the large cities; and that prosperity is in inverse proportion at the present time to the population. Mr. Charles B. Barnes, member of the special United States Commission on Industrial Relations, confirmed this from his observation during a recent trip through the Central States and those