

**TWENTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL
REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER
OF INDUSTRIAL STATISTICS MADE
TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT
ITS JANUARY SESSION 1914**

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Twenty-Seventh Annual Report of the Commissioner of Industrial Statistics Made to the General Assembly at Its January Session 1914 by George H. Webb

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GEORGE H. WEBB

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State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

TWENTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Commissioner of Industrial Statistics

MADE TO THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

AT ITS

JANUARY SESSION, 1914

UNIVERSITY

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1914

BUREAU OF INDUSTRIAL STATISTICS,

PROVIDENCE, R. I., January 31, 1914.

To His Excellency Aram J. Pothier,

Governor of the State of Rhode Island:

SIR.—I have the honor to present to you, and through you to the General Assembly, the twenty-sixth annual report of the Commissioner of Industrial Statistics of the State of Rhode Island.

Respectfully,

GEORGE H. WEBB,

Commissioner.

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INTRODUCTION

The twenty-seventh annual report of the Commissioner of Industrial Statistics contains the first analysis of the Rhode Island Workmen's Compensation Act, complete data pertaining to the workings of the act for the first year of its establishment, compiled from reports received from 2,018 establishments; a bulletin on Rhode Island Business Conditions, and the annual bulletin of the Rhode Island State Free Employment Office; a bulletin on Union Wage Earners in Rhode Island, and a Directory of Trade Unions; a resume of Strikes and Lockouts in Rhode Island for the past year, and the annual compilation of statistics of Municipal Finances of the cities and towns in Rhode Island for 1913.

The analysis of the Rhode Island Workmen's Compensation Act and the accompanying data, is the first report of its kind in this State. Representing as it does the results of an investigation of the workings of the law in one of the most compact industrial centers of the United States, as well as a diversity of interests which serve to bring out many points in the law and its enforcement, deserving of careful consideration, it is hoped that the labor entailed in its preparation and presentation may be beneficial to employers and to wage earners alike. It covered 2,018 establishments, employing nearly 156,000 wage earners, showing 43 deaths, and 11,953 accidents, with disbursements on account of the same amounting to \$198,328.

The bulletin on the condition of business in Rhode Island for 1913; shows a slight gain—though below the normal—in the trade and commerce of the State for the year past, and the entry of 1914 with optimism for the year to come, although actual reports for the time being show a considerable reduction in number of wage earners employed and in hours of labor.

The State Free Employment Office found more places for unemployed wage earners by 25 per cent. than in any year since 1909.

The second annual bulletin on Union Wage Earners in Rhode Island indicates an increase of 11 in the number of Labor Unions in the State, and a slight increase in membership, due largely to the formation of the Amalgamated Association of Electric and Street Railway Men's Division, No. 618, during the past year, with its membership of 2,389.

The bulletin on Strikes and Lockouts showed that there were 44 strikes in Rhode Island during the year ending November 30, 1913, participated in by 6,659 wage earners, covering periods ranging from one to thirty-one working days.

The time actually lost to employers and to employees alike, aggregate 72,268 days, involving a loss to wage earners of approximately \$122,855, and to employers in value of production of \$350,000.

Owing to the fact that Rhode Island still has no State Law compelling employers of labor to report labor difficulties to the Commissioner of Industrial Statistics, detailed information in regard to exact cause, effects and results cannot be presented in the report.

It is only by reference to the daily press, supplemented by such information as the Commissioner can obtain with his limited resources, that any record of labor troubles in Rhode Island can be compiled.

Such money as the Commissioner of Industrial Statistics is obliged to expend to secure this desired information, could be entirely saved by the passage by the General Assembly of a law requiring employers to give to the Commissioner, within a reasonable length of time, detailed information pertaining to every strike occurring in the State.

Such information would be more accurate than that now obtained in a round-about method, and the presentation of facts pertaining to labor difficulties in a comprehensive manner would inevitably tend to reduce the same in number as well as in severity.

Rhode Island wage earners are of a particularly high grade in both workmanship and intellect; and it would be to their benefit as well as to employers of labor, if the reporting of strikes be made compulsory.

It would not only be interesting, but it would also be beneficial to the entire population of the State, if accurate statistics showing what strikes do and do not accomplish in one of the greatest manufacturing communities of the country could be yearly collated and collaborated in an accurate manner.

It is for this reason that the Commissioner of Industrial Statistics recommends the passage by the 1914 General Assembly of a law requiring employers of labor to cooperate with this Bureau in the reporting of Strikes and Lockouts in Rhode Island.

The 44 strikes which occurred in Rhode Island indicate how little trouble or work such a law would bring to the employers of this State.

The statistics of Municipal Finances for the thirty-nine cities and towns of Rhode Island, involving receipts and disbursements approximating \$19,000,000 have been obtained and tabulated, but this work is so laborious, so intricate and so unsatisfactory, unless more cooperation is secured from the various town treasurers of the State, that unless some of the suggestions of this office made in its twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth annual reports are adopted, or more cooperation in the work is evidenced on the part of those who could make it comparatively easy, this bulletin will be omitted in the future.

It would be mere nonsense to state that the study of Municipal Statistics is time wasted, or that carefully prepared suggestions resulting from a study of the treasurer's reports of the thirty-nine cities and towns of the State are not worthy of consideration and in some cases at least, of adoption.

Without repeating the suggestions emanating from this office for the past two years, the Commissioner once more asks for their consideration by a committee of the 1914 General Assembly.

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