

**HOW THE GOVERNMENT HANDLED ITS LABOR  
PROBLEMS DURING THE WAR: HANDBOOK OF  
THE ORGANIZATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE  
NATIONAL LABOR ADMINISTRATION, WITH  
NOTES ON THEIR PERSONNEL, FUNCTIONS  
AND POLICIES, PP. 1-48**

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# **BUREAU OF INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH**

**HOW THE GOVERNMENT HANDLED ITS LABOR PROBLEMS DURING THE WAR: HANDBOOK OF THE ORGANIZATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE NATIONAL LABOR ADMINISTRATION, WITH NOTES ON THEIR PERSONNEL, FUNCTIONS AND POLICIES, PP. 1-48**



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## DEPARTMENT OF LABOR \*

Secretary of Labor: W. B. Wilson

Assistant Secretary of Labor: Louis F. Post

**T**HE Department of Labor, which formed the nucleus and the more permanent portion of the War Labor Administration, had been in existence since 1913, at which time the former Department of Commerce and Labor was resolved into two separate departments, each carrying a cabinet membership. Previous to the war the only Government agencies for dealing with labor problems and with industrial disputes were the various bureaus of this department. The bureaus at that time were four in number, namely, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bureau of Immigration, Bureau of Naturalization and the Children's Bureau. To these were added a Division of Conciliation and Mediation, carrying out the powers which were vested in the Secretary under the act creating the Department.

The Department expanded rapidly during the war and many new divisions were brought into existence to meet the needs of the war emergency and the growing demand for industrial efficiency.

### **Labor Administrator:**

In addition to mere increase in the number of bureaus, the Department took on a new importance in that Secretary of Labor Wilson was appointed by the President to act as War Labor Administrator, a power which he subsequently exercised in large measure through Mr. Frankfurter, the Chairman of the War Labor Policies Board. Thus Mr. Wilson combined in himself a dual authority. He acted in his normal capacity as Secretary of Labor and also exercised extraordinary prerogatives as director of emergency policies. Similarly, it must be remembered that the important divisions of the Department of Labor in addition to carrying on their normal work also served as units in the War Labor Administration.

\* The following outline shows the composition and indicates briefly the type of work carried out by the divisions of the Department. The first four divisions were in existence prior to our entry into the war; the remainder were reorganized or created since January 1, 1918. The future status of the new divisions is still undetermined.



## **Labor Cabinet**

The co-ordination of the work of the various divisions and bureaus of the Department of Labor as parts of this War Labor Administration were carried out through weekly meetings of their heads in a so-called Labor Cabinet.

### **Bureau of Labor Statistics\*:**

**Royal C. Meeker, Commissioner.**

Its function is to acquire and diffuse useful information on subjects connected with labor's relations with capital, hours of work, wages and earnings, prices of food and commodities. It reports its investigations through a publication *The Monthly Labor Review* (formerly called the *Monthly Review of the Bureau of Labor Statistics*) as well as through a series of bulletins.

### **Bureau of Immigration:**

**Anthony Caminetti, Commissioner General.**

This Bureau is charged with the administration of laws relating to immigration and the Chinese exclusion law. It investigates violations of the alien contracts law. Since the war it has had charge of detention camps for alien enemies. A Division of Information of this Bureau has been engaged in gathering information with regard to opportunities for employment of immigrants, a work now cared for by the Employment Service.

### **Bureau of Naturalization:**

**Richard K. Campbell, Commissioner.**

This Bureau supervises work in connection with applications for naturalization submitted to the designated courts in the states and territories. It co-operates with public schools in disseminating information concerning citizenship and civics.

### **Children's Bureau:**

**Miss Julia C. Lathrop, Chief.**

This Bureau is authorized to investigate and report upon all matters pertaining to children and child life. Much of its activity

\* This Bureau no longer investigates and awards compensation for injuries to federal employees, a work which it carried on prior to the creation of the United States Employees' Compensation Commission on September 7, 1916.

has been devoted to the protection of children in industry. It was charged with enforcing the provisions of the Federal Child Labor Law which became effective on September 1, 1917. When this law was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court on June 3, 1918, the War Labor Policies Board directed that safeguards practically identical with the provisions of the law be adhered to in all Government controlled industries and that these provisions be written into all Government contracts. The Children's Bureau was declared the instrument for their enforcement.

**Labor Adjustment Service:**

**Hugh L. Kerwin, Director.**

This Service was organized to carry on the work of mediation and conciliation formerly conducted by the Division of Conciliation in the Department of Labor. It was never operated where the work of conciliation was already provided for through some special body as, for example, the Shipbuilding Labor Adjustment Board in the shipbuilding industry, or the Industrial Service Section of the Ordnance Bureau in munition plants, or the Railway Adjustment Commission. The functions of the National War Labor Board should not be confused with those of this Service. The former was primarily a court of appeals to decide questions at issue between employers and employees where adjustments had not been reached through the machinery of existing agreements or law. Thus the case of the Philadelphia street railway strike was referred to and settled by the National War Labor Board after the conciliators from the Department of Labor had failed to establish an agreement. The Service had little or no power for enforcing its decisions. The act creating the Department of Labor says, "The Secretary of Labor shall have power to act as mediator and to appoint commissioners of conciliation in labor disputes whenever in his judgment the interests of industrial peace may require it to be done." In carrying out this power the Department neither dictated nor arbitrated — it negotiated and recommended.

**Employment Service:**

**John B. Densmore, Director-General.**

The organization of this Service under the Secretary of Labor began on January 3, 1918, and since underwent a rapid develop-

ment. It completely incorporated in itself the employment information service formerly conducted under the Bureau of Immigration. The most recent plan adopted by the Employment Service for effective recruiting and placement of labor included the organization of State advisory boards, community labor boards, and State organization committees, each composed of representatives of employers and workers, and of the United States Employment Service. The purpose was to give to employers and employees in each State and community a voice in the operation of the labor recruiting and distributing machinery of the Government and also to afford the Employment Service the full benefit of the knowledge and experience of local leaders. In effecting the establishment of local agencies and in carrying out its work this Service cooperated with the Post Office Department and the Departments of Agriculture, Interior and Commerce; with State and city organizations for the welfare of workers including employment bureaus, and with semi-official and unofficial agencies such as the National Farm Labor Exchange and the National Chamber of Commerce. The Service disseminated information through the weekly *United States Employment Service Bulletin*.

The Employment Service rapidly became an effective part of the War Labor Administration. President Wilson by executive order directed that after August 1, 1918, all unskilled male labor for plants employing more than 100 should be recruited solely through this Service. It was announced that as the Service grew this policy would be extended to skilled as well as unskilled labor and eventually to women as well as to men.

**Information and Education Service:**

**Roger W. Babson, Director.**

This Service was established to develop, particularly among working men, sound public sentiment on labor questions and the real issues of the war. To this end it was in cooperation with the Committee on Public Information. It also aimed to secure exchange of information among Services of the Labor Administration and to promote in industrial plants local machinery helpful in carrying out the national labor program.