

**FIRST ANNUAL REPORT OF THE
BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS
OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK FOR
THE YEAR 1883 [SEN. DOC. NO.
13]**

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BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

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U. S. Bureau of Statistics
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FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

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OF THE

BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

OF THE

STATE OF NEW YORK,

For the Year 1883.

TRANSMITTED TO THE LEGISLATURE, JANUARY 10, 1884.

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STATE OF NEW YORK.

No. 13.

IN SENATE,

JANUARY 10, 1884.

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS.

STATE OF NEW YORK:

BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS,
ALBANY, N. Y., *January 10, 1884.* }

To Hon. DAVID B. HILL,

Lieutenant Governor and President of the Senate:

SIR — In pursuance of chapter 356 of the Laws of 1883, I have the honor to present herewith the First Annual Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of New York, and respectfully request that you will lay the same before the Legislature.

I have the honor to be,

Yours, very respectfully,

CHARLES F. PECK,

Commissioner.

[Sen. Doc. No. 13.]

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REPORT.

The absence of reliable data upon which to base intelligent legislation by which the pecuniary interest or social condition of the industrial classes may be affected has been recognized for several years in this and other States, and has occasioned agitations calling for the formation of departments of statistics whose special duty should be to make inquiry into those subjects and report the results of their investigations yearly to the Legislature.

So generally had the want of such information been felt in this State, that the Legislature of 1883, by unanimous voice, decided upon the establishment of this Department.

Inasmuch as it was to some extent a new departure in our State legislation, and as the work of the first fiscal year would be necessarily, to a large extent, preparatory in its character, it was deemed unnecessary for the first year to place enlarged facilities at the disposal of this Department, until a report of progress had been made to your honorable body, and a better opportunity thus afforded for measuring the advantages of prosecuting, by this method, the search for the important and much-needed information.

THE LAW

which was passed, signed by the Governor and became effective on the 4th day of May, 1883, is as follows :

CHAP. 356.

AN ACT to provide for the establishment of a Bureau of Labor Statistics

PASSED May 4, 1883 ; three-fifths being present.

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows :

SECTION 1. The Governor shall, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, appoint, within ten days after the passage of this act, and thereafter triennially on the first Wednesday in April, some suitable person who shall be designated "Commissioner of Statistics of Labor," with head-quarters in the New Capitol at Albany.

§ 2. The duties of such Commissioner shall be to collect, assort, systematize and present in annual reports to the Legislature, within

ten days after the convening thereof in each year, statistical details relating to all departments of labor in the State, especially in relation to the commercial, industrial, social and sanitary condition of workingmen, and to the productive industries of the State.

§ 3. Said Commissioner shall also have power to send for persons and papers, to examine witnesses under oath, to take depositions, to cause them to be taken by others by law authorized to take depositions; and said Commissioner may depute any uninterested person to serve subpoenas upon witnesses who shall be summoned in the same manner, and paid the same fees as witnesses before a County Court, but for this purpose persons are not required to leave the vicinity of their residence or place of business. And no witness shall against his will be compelled to answer any question respecting his private affairs.

§ 4. The said Commissioner shall receive as his salary the sum of two thousand five hundred dollars per annum. He may appoint a clerk at an annual salary of one thousand two hundred dollars, and shall be allowed actual and necessary expenses, not exceeding the sum of three thousand dollars for the first year.

§ 5. The sum of six thousand seven hundred dollars, or so much thereof as may be necessary, is hereby appropriated for the purposes above mentioned, which sum the Treasurer shall pay, upon the warrant of the Comptroller, to the order of said Commissioner upon vouchers duly verified.

§ 6. All acts and parts of acts inconsistent with the foregoing provisions are hereby repealed.

§ 7. This act shall take effect immediately.

Upon the same date, the Governor nominated and the Senate confirmed the undersigned as its Commissioner, and on the 10th day of May, 1883, the Hon. David Healy was duly appointed chief clerk.

ORGANIZATION.

I need hardly remind you that the responsibilities resting upon the Commissioner of this new and thus far untried Department were great and necessitated no small amount of labor upon his own, but also upon the part of his worthy deputy.

Realizing the importance and appreciating the absolute necessity of starting in the right direction, I was slow to make haste, experience having fully demonstrated the fact that any department is very apt, if indeed not certain, to run in the rut in which it is started; and it was with this in view and that our State might profit by the experience of the oldest established bureau of a similar character in the country that I visited Boston and made a personal investigation of the workings of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of Massachusetts.

This bureau has been in operation during the past sixteen years, and is not only the oldest in point of service, but it is universally conceded to have been by far the most successful in work accom-

plished, of any of the several similar departments in the States of Pennsylvania, Ohio, New Jersey, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, California, Michigan and Wisconsin. Its Commissioner, the Hon. Carol D. Wright, has won a justly proud record by the very able and successful manner in which he has conducted its affairs; and by his fair, unbiased investigations and reports, has been accorded the great distinction of being accepted, both at home and abroad, as a standard authority on all questions bearing on the subject of capital and labor.

Unfortunately, I found upon my visit that the bureau's distinguished head was absent in Europe, but to my ultimate pleasure and profit, I also found that its able and courteous chief clerk, the Hon. Charles F. Pidgin, was at home; and it is to him and for the valuable assistance he generously rendered upon that and subsequent occasions, that our own State department is in its present advanced stage of organization.

In addition to the very valuable information gained by this personal investigation, I have corresponded with the Commissioners of Labor Statistics of the several different States mentioned, and from them have received, as far as possible, complete files of their annual reports, as well as of the various blanks used by them in collecting statistics. Both have been of great assistance, and it is owing largely to them that I feel justified in pronouncing the blanks used by this bureau the most complete and perfect for the object desired, ever issued from any similar department.

There has already been collected a considerable library — over four hundred volumes of reports, pamphlets, etc. — of important and valuable statistical information, embracing census reports of the several States and the United States, reports of the State, the Treasury; the Interior and Agricultural departments at Washington; reports of the Commissioner of Education, of the State Boards and Prisons of this and other States; reports of the chiefs of police of the different cities of the State, as well as a large number of other equally instructive and important statistical documents, all of which have been gifts to the Department.

So much of the first year was necessarily taken up in perfecting our organization that I found the few months remaining, in which to collect statistics on all the varied subjects contemplated by the law, entirely too brief, if I expected to do the business in a thorough and satisfactory manner. The very small appropriation made by the Legislature with which to conduct the affairs of the Department, was too insignificant to warrant the undertaking; and I, therefore, concluded that it would be much more satisfactory, both to the people and myself, to devote what limited time and appropriation I had, to the investigation of one subject and do that one thoroughly.

The subject that impressed itself upon me as the most important and opportune at the present time, was that of convict labor, as carried on by the State, and, as is claimed by a very large number of its citizens, in competition with the honest, free laboring men of the