

Social Legislation. *Employment Bureaus.* The problem of employment and employment offices was the subject of legislation in nineteen states, twelve enacting laws providing for free employment agencies for general and specific classes of unemployed, six enacting measures regulating and controlling private employment agencies, and one, Oregon, authorizing a committee to investigate the subject of unemployment and poverty and recommend remedial legislation. The Arkansas free employment bureau, maintained by the commissioner of labor, and the free employment offices in the state of Arizona were established by new statutes,¹ while amendments to the Colorado,² Georgia,³ Minnesota,⁴ and New Hampshire⁵ statutes provide for employment bureaus accessible to the unemployed free of charge. Illinois, Wisconsin and New York treated the problem of the unemployed with reference to special classes: discharged convicts, blind adults, and children entering industrial employment being the subjects in the respective states.

The legislature of Pennsylvania enacted an interesting statute (No. 411) providing for "increased opportunities for employment in useful public works" in the state during periods of "extraordinary unemployment caused by industrial depression," and creating a fund to be known as the emergency public works fund. The governor, auditor general, the state treasurer and the commissioner of labor and industry are constituted as an emergency public works commission for the "custody, management, and disposition" of the \$50,000 annual fund. The only prerequisites necessary for applicants are that they be citizens of the United States and residents of the state of Pennsylvania for six months.

Not less interesting is the law enacted by the legislature of South Carolina providing for a state board of charities and public welfare, of which at least one member must be a woman, and all of whom serve without pay. The duties of the board are to study nonemployment, poverty, vagrancy, housing conditions, and the prevention of any hurtful social condition; to "encourage employment by counties of a county superintendent of public welfare," and to "coöperate with the county superintendent." The county commissioners are given the power to create the county board of charities and public welfare, and to employ a county superintendent of public welfare. Among the duties of the

¹ Arkansas, ch. 21. Arizona, No. 11.

² Ch. 76.

³ Ch. 88.

⁴ Ch. 113.

⁵ Ch. 198.

superintendent is that of assisting the state board in finding employment for the unemployed.

The most important legislative action dealing with the regulation of private employment agencies was the restriction of licenses, registration fees, and limiting the time in which an agency may keep the registration fee if no employment is procured. The first law enacted on this subject by the legislature of the state of Tennessee regulates the license fee according to the population of the county. Another feature of this law is that the applicants for employment must be advised of the general conditions existing at the place to which they are sent, and must be told of the presence or absence of any labor dispute, strike, or lockout then existent with reference to the employment.

A Massachusetts bureau of immigration was created by the 1917 legislature,⁶ consisting of five persons appointed by the governor, to serve without compensation, but provided with an expense fund of \$10,000. Its purpose is to protect immigrants from exploitation and abuse, and to promote their assimilation and naturalization. Such legislative action is a means of bettering labor conditions among the immigrant population.

Bureaus of Labor. Of the states enacting labor bureau laws, Illinois, creating a civil administrative code, and Wyoming, providing for its first commissioner of labor and statistics, deserve special attention. The popularity of labor bureau legislation is shown by the acts increasing the total allowance of labor bureaus and the salaries of commissioners; reorganizing industrial laws and especially those concerning inspectors of industrial welfare and conditions, in some twelve of the state statutes; and the legislative action of the assemblies in the Philippines and Porto Rico providing in the former territory for the reduction of the salary of the bureau director, and in the latter for the appointment of an assistant to the commissioner of agriculture and labor. Mention should be made of the act passed by the legislature of Utah creating an industrial commissioner charged with inspection of factories and mines and gathering statistics. Massachusetts in 1918 (ch. 276) authorized the appointment of five additional inspectors for the emergency to serve for one year.

The civil administrative code of Illinois⁷ creates a department of labor, a department of mines and minerals and a department of registration and education. Directors and assistant directors, approved by

⁶ Ch. 321.

⁷ *Acts*, 1917, p. 2.

the governor with the approval of the senate, act in coöperation with advisory and nonexecutive boards. The department of labor exercises and discharges the duties of the industrial board created by the workmen's compensation law, and, in addition, performs the duties of the commissioners of labor, superintendents of free employment offices, inspectors of private employment agencies, factory inspectors, and the state board of arbitration and conciliation. The department of mines and minerals exercises all the powers formerly invested in the state mining board, the state mine inspectors and the miners' examining commission, and also seeks to promote the general welfare and safety of miners. The duties of the department of registration and education are to exercise the powers vested in the board of examiners of horse-shoers, and the state board of barber examiners.

Wyoming in creating a commissioner of labor and statistics inaugurated a new office in the state. The duties of the office are to enforce all laws relating to labor and to the health, welfare, and life of the workers of the state; to investigate industrial conditions and to report recommendations for improvement to the governor.

Mothers' pensions. The first laws on this subject were enacted in 1911 when Missouri and Illinois granted sums of money to the mothers of dependent children. Since 1911 over thirty states have enacted laws covering this subject. The extension of this legislation is shown by the fact that six states⁸ enacted original laws in 1917, while ten other states passed amendments to the former laws on the subject. The new legislation applies in general to fixing the relative amount to be paid to the mother according to the age of dependency, and other factors.

The allowance to the parent is authorized in the Montana act only when the mother may be required to work regularly in the absence of such an allowance. The Texas law requires that the board of county commissioners see that the widow receiving the allowance is keeping the dependent children properly, and that they are properly cared for and fed. The board has the power to revoke an order provided for under the act when it deems the support no longer necessary. Arizona provides for local boards of child welfare in each county of the state directly responsible to the board of supervisors of the state. Arkansas makes provision for wives of husbands incapacitated for work. In each city, town and plantation, the legislature of Maine established a

⁸ Montana, ch. 83; Texas, ch. 120; Arizona, No. 70; Arkansas, No. 326; Maine, ch. 222; Minnesota, ch. 223, 1917.

municipal board of mothers' aid which reports to the state board. The law of Minnesota provides that no allowance shall be paid toward the support of any child who has become "lawfully entitled to apply for and receive an employment certificate or who has ceased to be under the immediate care of the mother."

Interesting amendments to the laws of several states are seen in the acts of Oregon,⁹ Wisconsin¹⁰ and Nevada.¹¹ The Oregon amendment requires that a mother must be a citizen of the United States, and of the state for three years. Members of the family over age and older members or friends living with the family must contribute proportionately to the expenses of the household. No assistance is given to an applicant who has property of an appraised value exceeding \$500. The Wisconsin law now provides that the parent receiving aid shall file monthly with the judge of the juvenile or county court a statement showing the expenditures of the money received under this act, and the receipts or vouchers for the same. The judge may also require the mother to do such remunerative work as she can do without neglecting her children or her home. The amendment to the Nevada law allows the mother \$25 per month for one child under the age of fifteen years, and \$15 per month for each of the other children under the prescribed age, but the entire allowance must not be more than \$55 per month.

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Taxation in 1917 and 1918. *Classification of Property.* The legislature of South Dakota, in 1917, proposed¹ an amendment to the constitution, providing for the classification of property for the purposes of taxation. Uniform taxes are to be levied on all property in the same class. "Property" includes money and credits, privileges, franchises, and licenses to do business, as well as physical property. Taxes may also be levied upon gross earnings, net incomes, and occupations— income taxes may be graduated and progressive. The legislature is empowered to make reasonable exemptions in the different classes. This amendment is a slight variant from the one proposed² in 1915, providing for the classification of property for the purposes of taxa-

⁹ Ch. 267, 1917.

¹⁰ Ch. 289, 1917.

¹¹ Ch. 11, 1917.

¹ 1917, *Session Laws*, p. 212.

² South Dakota 1915, *Session Laws*, p. 463.