

## BUREAU OF REHABILITATION



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Director

The Bureau of Rehabilitation was created for the purpose of rehabilitating, or rendering, physically handicapped persons fit to engage in remunerative occupations.

Pennsylvania, as a Commonwealth, recognized in 1919 the necessity for restoring to useful productive activity and self-supporting efforts, so far as possible, the victims of the thousands of accidents occurring annually in its industries. That realization

followed the efforts of all nations, engaged in the great war, to accomplish similar results for the battle and disease victims of national hostilities. The wounded and disabled civilians in industry exceed, in any great industrial community, over a period of years, the numbers from such community disabled in armed conflict. That condition is particularly true of Pennsylvania with its coal mines, great iron and steel mills, and extensive transportation lines.

"Rehabilitation" was chosen as the title of the bureau created in the Department of Labor and Industry during the legislative session of 1919, following the enactment, in 1915, of workmen's compensation legislation, for the benefit of industrial accident victims.

The Bureau of Rehabilitation was not created to dole charity or relief payments to disabled persons; it was not intended to attempt to restore to occupational activity, aged or helpless persons requiring custodial care, blind or deaf persons under the care of any State or semi-State institutions, epileptics, feeble-minded persons, or any person not susceptible, physically and mentally to occupational rehabilitation. Consequently, the legislative intent of the Act was plain. The Bureau of Rehabilitation is to confine its efforts toward restoring to useful occupations persons physically handicapped, whose handicaps, however, are not so severe as to render them incapable of performing suitable, if specialized, tasks.

The purpose of the legislation, although evidently humanitarian, was primarily economic. It was to coordinate under State auspices the many similar efforts toward rehabilitation by individual disabled persons, relief organizations, employers and employes.

An Act of Congress, which became effective June 2, 1920, by approval of the President, recognized rehabilitation as a national issue, and granted Federal aid to the States in total amount of \$1,000,000 a year, such portion going to each State as the population of such State compared with the total population of the whole country, with the further proviso that the States must formally accept such Federal funds and expend for the same purpose an amount equal to that expended from Federal funds. Pennsylvania accepted the Federal cooperation by legislation in 1921.

### WHAT CAN THE BUREAU OF REHABILITATION DO?

The legislation in Pennsylvania, for the restoration of its disabled citizens to useful activity, empowers the Bureau of Rehabilitation of the Department of Labor and Industry: