

handed down to them. Other administrators recognize that guiding the development of the law is an inescapable duty, because those who administer the law are in the best position to know what needs to be done. Sometimes a compensation administrator can accomplish much more by staying up with a legislative committee until 3 a. m. than by weeks of presiding over claims controversies. The 1948 report of the Idaho Industrial Accident Board records a change from the "hands off" policy as to leadership, tradition yielding to recognized necessity. The Minnesota law specifically requires the Industrial Commission to observe the operation of the law and make recommendations as to changes. The method by which the Wisconsin Industrial Commission guides law changes should by all means be studied by visitors to this state, and, also, in California there is the vigorous and able leadership of Paul Scharrenberg. Not all pressure groups accept without strong persuasion the maxim that the compensation laws were passed for the benefit of injured workers. "Selfish interests" present their bills to each session of the legislature and stay up night and day to lobby them through. The business of a shepherd is of course to feed his sheep, but of necessity he must guard them from wolves.

Most compensation administrators agree that workmen's compensation is "big business," but sometimes their business management is that of the proprietor of the corner grocery store, who likes to wait on the customers himself. Do they believe that no employee could be found, hired or trained who could hear controversies as well as they do? In 1919 Royal Meeker, then the secretary-treasurer of this association, said:

... nearly all compensation boards are obliged to devote almost their whole time and energy to hearing cases and handing out to cripples, widows, and orphans the niggardly doles provided in their laws for the victims of the industrial juggernaut. Our lawmakers have thus far failed to grasp the fundamental economic and ethical principles of workmen's compensation.

The result of the exhausting hours spent by commissioners in presiding over controversy has been much the same as if the manager of a big league baseball team spent his time umpiring the games. With very few exceptions, there has been little improvement in the business management of workmen's compensation, or in the methods applicable to workmen's compensation administration, in 30 years. Of course, I do not refer to improvements in the mechanical gadgets used. The daily chores consumed the capacity for creative thought, and compensation administration has stayed in a rut for 30 years. As to getting out of the rut on their own steam, many of the commissions are in a difficult situation, because they are bound hand and foot—they are in bondage both to the courts and to the legislature. It looks as if this association will have to help them, if help is ever to be found. The courts tie up the commissions in red tape, and the legislatures will not give them enough money for efficient operation. Let us go back to the beginning and find out what is to blame for the present plight of the administrations.

Examine the laws in the light of their historical origin. The original German law set up a self-supporting and self-directing insurance plan under government supervision. In mentioning the principles of self direction and self support as the foundation of an efficient workmen's compensation program, it is neither necessary nor desirable to enter the controversy as to the respective merits of public or private insurance. The principles of self direction and self support can be applied to both public and private insurance systems. Believe it or not, some visiting American