

# HEAD OF CHILDREN'S BUREAU SAYS EDUCATION IS NEED OF THE HOUR

## New Leader of Bureau Brings Efficiency and Deep Understanding to Her Task.

BY GEORGE R. HOLMES, International News-Service Staff Correspondent. WASHINGTON, Sept. 23.—Ask Miss Grace Abbott, the new government leader to some 20,000,000 American children, what is the crying need for the American child of today and you get an answer quick as a flash. "Education."

that are vitally needed to benefit the child life of America. But the first and foremost stands education. After that comes hygiene, the abolition of child labor and kindred matters. Education will eradicate the other ills afflicting American child life. With education, hygiene will take care of itself, and with education there can be no child labor, because the evils of it are clear to the educated mind.

No idle dreamer is this new god-mother to the children of America, who has taken over the children's bureau of the department of labor. It is one of the biggest jobs a woman can hold in Washington, except perhaps in point of salary.

Radiates Efficiency. And Miss Abbott brings to it no lofty theories and idealistic notions about what can be done to better the child life of the nation. There is little of feminine fluffiness about her, either personally or the manner in which she has tackled the job. Rather she radiates efficiency—not the cold, steel-like efficiency of the machine, but the understanding sort of efficiency that bespeaks a love of her work and an unusual knowledge of human nature.

Miss Abbott brings into the children's bureau an experience gained in the school of hard knocks in welfare work. She was born in Nebraska thirty-odd years ago when Nebraska was mostly rural. She educated herself by dint of hard work and close application to business, which has left her so tiny a wrinkle between her snapping black eyes.

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The teeming slums and foreign quarters of Chicago fascinated her, and the years that followed her college in Grand Island, Neb., she did alleviate the conditions which she found all too prevalent in the Windy City. For some years she was director of the Chicago League for the protection of immigrants, an organization which many now-prosperous Chicago business men remember gratefully.

Then Boston attracted her and she went to Massachusetts as executive secretary of the state immigration commission. Under her direction an exhaustive investigation and report were made in immigration problems. Then Illinois reclaimed her and she went back to the scenes of her early experience as executive secretary of the state immigration commission created in Illinois.

To use her own expression, Miss Abbott "came up from the ranks" to her present position.

She learned early in her welfare work that to accomplish the most good welfare work must be started with children. So in 1917 she came to Washington as director of the child labor division of the children's bureau of the department of labor.

Champion of Children. This division administered the first federal child labor law, and Miss Abbott was, from the beginning, responsible for the formation and development of its policies.

Feeling that she ought to get into work more closely allied with the war, Miss Abbott transferred her abilities to the war labor policies board and rendered able, efficient service until the war closed.

"And there's the story," she concluded.

That was not quite the end, for a few days ago President Harding selected her from a horde of applicants to head the children's bureau in which she has labored so diligently as a divisional chief. The position pays \$5,000 a year and is one of the most eagerly sought positions in Washington.

She has entered upon her new duties with a vigor and close application to duty that set a hard example for her associates.

It was a sweltering late September afternoon when the question was propounded to her of what is the crying need of the American child. Outside thousands of government clerks were hurrying down the heat-waved streets, their day finished. But Miss Abbott stuck grimly to her desk, perspiring. It is true, but sticking. She keeps no union hours.

"Education is the keystone," she said simply. "That is our principal aim. You see, our funds and our personnel are too limited to do direct contact work, so we must content ourselves with preaching, teaching and instructing."

Curtailment Injuries.

"You would be surprised at the number of letters we receive every month asking information on child welfare. Last month they were 5,000. Many of them came from mothers, many came from students. One thing in particular they want—a pamphlet on infant care."

"We comply to the best of our ability, but our resources are so scanty in comparison with the demand. We can only fill about half the requests we receive for literature and advice. The advice is easy, but the literature comes hard. Like all other departments in these days of economy we have had to curtail our operations, particularly our printing bill, and it is hard not to be able to supply the demand."

Miss Abbott is going to give particular attention to betterment of child life in the rural districts of America. She grew up in rural Nebraska and she knows some of the problems and the heartaches of young rural America.

"For years," she said, "we have heard so much about the terrors of child life in the slums and congested centers of cities. It is all true, but it is also true that conditions in some of our rural regions are just as bad."

"Children are kept out of school to help with the crops; they are kept out of school to tend stock; they are kept out of school to tend the thousand and one things about a farm, and it isn't right. Children in the rural districts should have the advantages of school just as much as those in the cities."

She is undaunted by lack of funds and other resources necessary to the growth and expansion of the bureau. "These are hard times," she said, smiling. "We will do the best we can."



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# Paramount Pictures

WORLD'S SERIES TO START ON OCTOBER 5

CHICAGO, Sept. 23.—(U. P.)—The world series will start October 5, it was announced today. The first game is to be played on the home grounds of the National league pennant winners. In the event Pittsburgh or Cleveland should win in their respective leagues, two games will be played in Pittsburgh and then two in Cleveland. New York teams at present are leading the two leagues. President Hoeyler of the Nationals won the toss for the first game for his league.

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