Labor Commissioner

The office of the Commissioner of Labor was created by the 1915 Nevada Legislature as Chapter 203, Statutes of Nevada, 1915 (NRS 607). The Commissioner’s duties were to foster, promote, develop, and enforce laws designed to protect the men, women, and children who comprise the working population of Nevada; to improve their working conditions, and to advance their opportunities for profitable employment. Specific duties included the gathering of statistics related to workers in thirteen industrial categories (mining, manufacturing, transportation, etc); determining prevailing wage scales for public works; collecting unpaid wages; enforcing eight-hour work days; licensing private employment agencies; enforcing laws related to employment of women and children; monitoring employment of migrant laborers; and if requested by the governor, serving as a mediator for labor disputes. The Commissioner is also the Director of Apprenticeship in Nevada.

The 1993 Nevada Legislature created the Department of Business and Industry (B&I) as part of a reorganization of the executive branch of state government. The office of the Labor Commissioner was incorporated as one of twenty-nine units of Business and Industry but the responsibilities remained much the same as previously. The Labor Commissioner is appointed by the Director of B&I; the Commissioner’s office is in Carson City with a branch office in Las Vegas (established in 1943). The office also consists of a Deputy Director, eight investigators, and nine support staff.

Records Description Dates: 1918 - 2003; bulk 1932-1993 Volume: 9 cu. ft..

The collection of the Nevada Labor Commissioner consists of records created and received in the administration of the office. The variety of records reflects the variety of responsibilities of the office: arbitration of labor claims, agreements and disputes; the determination of wage rates/scales in all Nevada counties; enforcement of labor laws; and granting of licenses to private employment agencies. The types of records include correspondence, reports, and censuses of various kinds of businesses/labor organizations. There are a fair number of reports and correspondence related to labor for the construction of Boulder Dam, including the employment of Blacks, and reports and photos documenting the humanitarian relief of migratory farm laborers in the Las Vegas area in 1959. Also included are minutes of the Nevada Apprenticeship Council, 1977-1996, in both paper and audio formats; and a series of photographs of migrant labor living conditions near Overton, 1959.