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Introduction

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INTRODUCTION

SPENCER H. GIVENS*

I think it is significant that the June 1961, issue of the *Missouri Law Review*, featuring a symposium on workmen's compensation, comes on the fiftieth anniversary of the first workmen's compensation law in the United States held to be constitutional, that of Wisconsin, passed May 3, 1911.

Workmen's compensation was the pioneer in social legislation, and came about logically as populations centralized and industrialized. The development of administrative law generally, both at state and federal levels, is greatly indebted to the theory that prompted workmen's compensation and the procedures that implemented it.

The agencies administering the Missouri Workmen's Compensation Law welcome the emphasis that the School of Law of the University of Missouri is placing on it by this symposium, for there is always need for informed lawyers in this highly specialized field. The Missouri law became effective November 2, 1926, when it was approved by a referendum, and the original injunction as to hearing procedure was that it be "simple and informal." Informality is still maintained but simplicity long since has disappeared. The litigation potential in each injury case now is treble that of twenty years ago.

Workmen's compensation literature is vast and diverse. The greatest source of information is the published proceedings of the annual meetings of the International Association of Industrial Accident Boards and Commissions. Specialized approaches have been made by scholarly students in the areas of law, theory, practice, administration, labor, economics, and management. There are numerous articles, monographs, research studies, and editorial criticisms, and countless medical books and papers. And in Missouri alone there are more than one thousand appellate court decisions in workmen's compensation cases. All of this literature is valuable and helpful, but the practical experience of practicing Missouri professionals, which is the special recommendation of the symposium that follows, is equally so.

Space in the *Review* is necessarily limited and must therefore be used to

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the best advantage. This is a result that the editors have eminently attained by choosing topics for discussion that deal with fundamentals. The authors all speak with authority, for each is expert in the area about which he writes. All have been prominently identified with workmen's compensation in Missouri for many years, but lawyers in states other than our own could also well read what they have to say.