

The operations of the Purchasing Board are closely inter-related with those of the Federal Specifications Board, which compiles and promulgates standard specifications for materials and services, bringing specifications into harmony with the best commercial practice. It also endeavors to broaden the field of supply. The Director of the Bureau of Standards is ex-officio chairman of the board which consists of groups of technical committees made up of experts selected for their special knowledge of particular commodities or classes of commodities. The board has promulgated its seven hundred and seventeenth federal specification, and it is now quite a usual thing to see manufacturers placing on their products the statement: "This product conforms to United States Government Specification _____."

The Federal Traffic Board was established for the purpose of effecting a better business administration throughout the government service in the complicated business of handling of passenger, freight and express shipments. It utilizes in a practical way the various available carrying facilities and institutes methods for the prompt handling of the government's traffic. Every government shipment of two or more carloads is referred to the board for routing and through this control and by means of its contact with the carriers the board has been able to obtain directness of service and to effect large savings. As it exists at present it provides a skeleton organization around which might be built a federal traffic bureau, should such an activity ever become a necessity.

The Federal Real-Estate Board co-ordinates all matters affecting the real property of the government, including procurement, occupancy and disposal. It collects and compiles data pertaining to owned or leased real estate and suggests changes that may be desirable in the interest of the economical use of lands or buildings. All projects for the purchase, sale or lease of real estate are required to be submitted to the board for clearance. Its decisions form the basis of the Surveyor General's action on all real-estate matters.

The Interdepartmental Board on Simplified Office Procedure, engaged in devising standard forms and practices for federal offices, has been very successful in eliminating a mass of non-standard material and has reduced the supply schedule on items of common use from many hundred to a relatively few items.

The Interdepartmental Board on Contracts and Adjustments renders valuable service in standardizing

business arrangements and in reconciling differences.

The Patents Board and the Forest Protection Board were created to deal with specific problems, the first to formulate a governmental policy with respect to handling the inventions of federal employes, and the second to co-ordinate and bring together for greater efficiency the federal activities engaged in the various phases of forest protection.

The Federal Standard Stock-Catalogue Board is actively at work on a compilation which will simplify widely the procurement, care and issue of government stores. Recently a board has been appointed to study the important matter of reconciling and co-ordinating the collection, arrangement and distribution of governmental statistics.

Each board, in its particular field, accomplishes valuable and constructive work, but it should be kept in mind that these agencies are not given final executive power. They are intended to act simply as standing committees in which representatives of departments and establishments are assembled in order that information may be made common to all and that common interests may be served. All duty with boards is in addition to the departmental duties regularly belonging to members. The boards have found to be of particular value as groups for the contacting of federal activity with that of industry.

Enlightenment is desirable with regard to costs and accomplishments of the co-ordinating branch now accepted as being essential and businesslike.

Not much is to be said regarding costs. The payroll of the Army and Navy officers and the sixty-seven civilians engaged exclusively in work of co-ordination annually amounts to about \$307,500, but there have been no additional demands upon the Treasury because of it, for both the personnel and material necessary for the organization are drawn from other establishments.

Concerning accomplishments, President Coolidge, in an address on January 29, 1927, stated that: "One of the great lessons we have learned in the transaction of our business is the value of co-ordinated effort. Co-ordination in any business is essential to success. The nation's business is no exception. For many long years the executive departments and establishments operated independently with little or no concern for the common good of all. This is no longer the case. The old order of things has disappeared. In its place we have a well co-ordinated executive branch of the government. Departmental lines have given way and

departmental prerogatives have willingly surrendered to policies and practices which are adopted for the best interests of all."

Since the inauguration of the service of co-ordination, directly traceable savings—not including inter-departmental transfers of surplus property—have totaled over \$19,000,000. During the past fiscal year savings, including those effected through transfer of property, sponsored by the Federal Co-ordinating Service, amounted to nearly \$6,000,000. The total value of all property exchanged between departments, through the processes of co-ordination, now amounts to about \$153,000,000.

More important, however, than all the economies effected directly through co-ordination is the incalculable value of the development interdepartmentally of a conception of co-operation and service unity. There are clear indications that *how* expenditures are made has become a matter of moment quite as important as *who* makes them. It is also coming to be recognized that the best administrator is not necessarily he who succeeds in getting the most out of legislation for the purposes of his office, but is also one who, like a vice-president of any great corporation, makes the most out of such appropriations as may be allotted to him.

As it becomes evident that surrendering the control of details more directly concerning others always permits expansion and better effort in one's own domain, the red-tape-bound walls of isolation surrounding departmental prestige will have many gates, easing the way for unselfish co-operation and co-ordinated control.

Passing from a consideration of federal co-ordination we may concern ourselves briefly with more complicated problems in which the government is involved.

The statement of a German economist "that each nation should above all things develop harmoniously its natural resources to the highest possible degree of independence, protecting its own industry and preferring the national aim to the pecuniary advantage of individuals" applies with force to America.

Now directness is important; for, with machines quickening action, thought, planning and decision must get into gear. This is the power age. All modern industrial accomplishments, whether procurement, mass production, rapid transport, or the design of machinery and appliances for the conservation of time and labor, lead back to power. The efficient generation of energy by falling water, steam or internal-combustion engines;

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the minimizing of waste in power generation, transmission and utilization, either in connection with individual plants or interconnected power pools, are co-ordinating problems of the first magnitude urgently demanding the scientific attention of engineering management.

Agriculture gives occupation to some ten million workers and upon it some thirty millions of our people look for support. The prosperity of the country is reflected by the work of the farmer now tremendously intensified through mechanization. The co-ordination of the procurement of agricultural commodities with distributors' requirements is a most pressing modern economic problem.

Depletion of our supplies of coal, oil, gas and timber proceeds rapidly, though knowledge is common that better conservation of these resources and the co-ordination of their consumption with requirement are vital.

Co-ordinated power-driven tools have speeded up procurement of materials and the production of goods, while, at the same time, inventive genius has improved possibilities for prompt and cheap distribution. But transportation is replete with complication. Unless *co-ordination acts*, an unco-ordinated but scientifically developed power will continue a grinding wastage through processes of overproduction, and unco-ordinated, unscientific systems of procurement and disposal will continue to augment the dire possibilities of agricultural, industrial and financial depression.

While wise legislation is necessary to assist development and to make practicable the many adjustments continuously necessary in industrial occupations, co-ordination must be given life by those concerned in industry. It cannot come from others.

Scientific regulation, through the action of business associations and organization of the leading industries, may bridge a direct path through the maze of procurement, production and distribution. If successful in so doing it will prepare the way for the exercise of the co-ordinator's art.

Broadening of business management is a requisite for today. There is no such thing as complete national economic independence. Countries produce and distribute in accordance with world-wide demands. No longer is commerce pushed before the point of a bayonet, and the slogan that trade follows a protecting flag has ceased to apply. The guidons of traffic have become cost, insurance and freight, but those seeking the means for straightening and for freeing the paths