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Robert BOULIN
(Phonetic: booLAN)

FRANCE

Minister of Labor
(since April 1978)

Addressed as:
Mr. Minister



A longtime Gaullist moderate who has served with distinction under four prime ministers, Robert Boulin has held eight different Cabinet posts during the past 18 years. He has set a new French record for ministerial longevity and is especially proud of his 13 years (1961-73) of consecutive service in Gaullist governments. Formerly Minister Delegate to the Prime Minister in Charge of Economy and Finance (1977-78), Boulin is knowledgeable about France's controversial economic policies, and his mastery of technical issues enables him to speak clearly and convincingly on many economic issues. A firm, skillful negotiator, Boulin currently has the unenviable task of curbing France's growing social and labor unrest, which has resulted, in part, from record-breaking unemployment (now at 1.3 million) and concern for job security. He apparently does not expect unemployment to stabilize before the end of 1979, but the March 1979 unemployment compensation agreement has at least brightened prospects for improved labor-management relations in France.

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He apparently has a reputation as a dynamic and resourceful politician, ready to take the risks involved in tackling difficult problems. As Agriculture Minister (1968-69), he was noted for his courage in proposing much needed but unpopular reforms to encourage marginal producers to leave the soil and seek more useful occupations. With the equally difficult portfolio of Public Health and Social Security (1969-72), he was able to bring about a minireform, known as the Boulin Plan, within

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the social security program. He also devoted much time and energy to fighting France's growing drug problem. Because of his flair for public relations and his well-refined talents as a conciliator, Boulin twice was given the important post of Minister Delegate to the Prime Minister for Parliamentary Relations (1972-73, 1976-77). [REDACTED]

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Background

During World War II, Boulin served with Gen. Charles de Gaulle and was active in the Resistance. Educated in law, he has practiced in the city of Libourne, where he has also been mayor since 1959. Boulin first entered the National Assembly in 1958, as a deputy from Gironde, and he has been reelected ever since. He has had to forgo his parliamentary mandate, however, in order to serve in the Cabinet. Boulin's earlier Cabinet posts included those of Secretary of State for Repatriation (1961-62), Secretary of State for Budget (1962-66), Secretary of State for Economy and Finance (1967-68), and Minister of Civil Service (1968). Also active in business affairs, he has served as a high-ranking executive in the Perrier beverage firm. [REDACTED]

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Personal Data

The 58-year-old Boulin is married to the former Colette Lalande. They have two grown children, Bertrand and Fabienne. For relaxation, Boulin enjoys horseback riding. His proficiency in English is not known. [REDACTED]

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19 April 1979

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