

# Secretary of Commerce Sinclair Weeks

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### Secretary of Commerce Sinclair Weeks

When Sinclair Weeks was chosen to be Secretary of Commerce, he may not have had strong or even clear views on the future of transportation.

His father, John W. Weeks, served in the U.S. House of Representatives (1905-1913) and the United States Senate (1913-1919). He also served as Secretary of War under Presidents Warren G. Harding and Calvin Coolidge from 1921 until he resigned in 1925 because of failing health. He died the following year.

Sinclair Weeks was a conservative businessman from Massachusetts who had served in the United States Senate from February to December 1944, completing the term of Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr.. A graduate of Harvard University, Weeks was chairman of the board of United Carr Fastener Company of Cambridge; president of Reed and Barton Company, silversmiths of Taunton; and a member of the Board of Overseers of Harvard. He was also a director of the National Association of Manufacturers.

As Chairman of the Republican Party's Finance Committee, Weeks was known for his ability as a fund raiser. He also had been one of the first of the upper echelon Republicans to break with Senator Robert Taft in June 1952, urging him to step aside in favor of General Dwight D. Eisenhower for the Republican nomination "to save the country."

President-elect Eisenhower, who had not met Weeks prior to the appointment, was initially not impressed by him. Following one of their early meetings, Eisenhower wrote in his diary:

[He] seems so completely conservative in his views that at times he seems to be illogical. I hope . . . that he will soon become a little bit more aware of the world as it is today.

By the time Eisenhower wrote his memoir, *Mandate for Change 1953-1956*, he had a different assessment: "This great highway system will stand in part as a monument to the man in my Cabinet who headed the department responsible for it, and who himself spent long hours mapping out the program and battling it through the Congress--Secretary of Commerce Sinclair Weeks."

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