

THE INDUSTRIAL SAFETY MOVEMENT

INDUSTRIAL INJURY RATES HAVE ALSO DECREASED

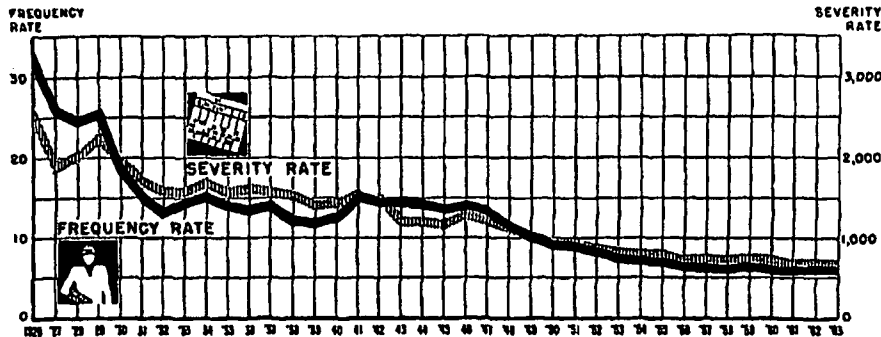


Fig 1-9 Today, the average American has a better chance of avoiding accidental death. Left chart, based on figures for the entire country, shows number of deaths is down even though number of workers is up. Chart above, based on figures of companies reporting to the National Safety Council, shows both the frequency and severity of industrial accidents to be down, even though industrial production has increased.

panies involved in the work of the organized safety movement, they cannot be dismissed as representing a handful of firms with an exceptionally high level of safety enthusiasm. The 1963 figures are based on reports from 12,539 units. These units were principally manufacturing concerns, which accounted for about one-third of the total number of manufacturing man-hours worked in America.

It would be fair, perhaps, to call these figures representative of large-plant experience in this country, since the Council receives the majority of its reports from large concerns and only a minority from small plants.

Safety men cannot afford to underestimate the significance of the statistical data on their past performance. It is abundantly clear that the bitter problem confronting the safety pioneers of 1913 has been attacked with amazing success. However, the job is probably only half finished so progress is still being made. This is shown by latest available data.

The dollar values

It has been estimated that occupational accidents cost the United States over \$5,000,-

000,000 in 1963. If the 1912 accident rates had been left unchanged and if there had been no organized safety movement, this annual cost might have been two or three times as great.

Against such dollar savings, the relatively small expenditures for safety throughout America provide a striking contrast. Each dollar spent for safety by American industry is actually producing a clear profit of several hundred per cent.

Industry and off-the-job accidents

Directly and indirectly, industry is bearing a substantial part of the burden of preventing off-the-job accidents. The National Safety Council is the creation of industry and largely supported by it. Statewide and local safety organizations play a major role in the fight against such accidents, and they, too, are largely industrial in origin and support.

Many industrial firms do a direct off-the-job educational service among employees and their families. Industry supports a large part of the job of informing the general public on these problems through the press, radio, and television.