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Contents for February, 1933

THE COVER . . "RUNNING SMOOTHLY"—A STUDY IN GEARS AND WHEELS
RECENT ADVANCES IN PHYSICS . . . . . *W. F. G. Swann* 75
DUST IN INDUSTRY . . . . . *Frederick Willson* 80
THE SOCIAL EFFECTS OF MASS PRODUCTION . . . *D. S. Kimball* 83
EDUCATIONAL PREPARATION FOR CREATIVE TECHNICAL ENGINEERING LEADERSHIP . . . . . *R. E. Doherty* 90
THE PROBLEM OF ECONOMIC BALANCE . . . . . *S. H. Slichter* 95
THE TRADE ASSOCIATION'S PART IN COORDINATE PLANNING . . . . *E. L. Heermance* 101
THE RELATION OF WEATHER TO TRANSOCEANIC FLYING . . . . . *J. H. Kimball* 105
NEW CONSTRUCTION CAN RESTORE PROSPERITY . . . *D. C. Coyle* 111
STEAM RESEARCH:
PROGRESS OF WORK AT MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY . *F. G. Keyes and L. B. Smith* 113
PROGRESS OF WORK AT U. S. BUREAU OF STANDARDS . *N. S. Osborne* 116

EDITORIAL 118
SURVEY OF ENGINEERING PROGRESS . 120
SYNOPSES OF A.S.M.E. PAPERS . . . 133
BOOK REVIEWS AND LIBRARY NOTES 141
CORRESPONDENCE 135
RESEARCH—STANDARDIZATION . . 138
A.S.M.E. BOILER CODE 140

DISPLAY ADVERTISEMENTS 1
PROFESSIONAL SERVICE 26
CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS . . . 28
INDEX TO ADVERTISERS 30

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DUST *in* INDUSTRY

Shop Methods and Equipment Effective in Controlling Dust Hazards

By FREDERICK WILLSON, M.D.[1]

JUST at this time employers in dusty trades find themselves in a difficult, if not alarming, position. Not fully warned or informed, until lately, of the special dangers of certain dusts, employers have naturally exercised merely general care in dust prevention.

Under such "general care" some of their workmen—those exposed to silica, and siliceous, dusts—have been found to be suffering (if indeed some have not died)

the atmosphere should constantly be alert and watchful, discounting to the fullest extent every possibility of danger. Employers should not conclude that they have entirely eliminated danger of silicosis, or of any type of pneumonoconiosis, simply because the air is seemingly free from dust. It should be borne in mind that the particles which do the most harm are invisible and that

When management and workmen pool their interests in behalf of safety, then certainly safety will finally be won. Research lies with the scientist, but the intelligent application of the knowledge thus obtained, as it applies to occupational diseases, is a moral responsibility of industry.

damage suits just referred to. However, from now on, with the spread of common, or at least available, knowledge of the peculiar danger of certain dusts, only "special care" will safeguard the interests of employer and workman alike.

PRECAUTIONS NECESSARY WHERE DANGEROUS OR POISONOUS DUSTS ARE PRESENT

Let us now consider what present steps will constitute "special care" where dangerous or poisonous dusts are present: in other words, what shop precautions are now known to be absolutely necessary, based on the knowledge of silicosis just made available to us.

Employers in industries where free silica is present in

to the danger of tubercular infection from one another, that every facility in the way of dressing rooms, lunch rooms, and wash rooms is provided, and that every piece of protective equipment is kept in perfect working order.

Good housekeeping is, after all, one of the major considerations in the protection of workmen where there is dust of a hazardous nature. Dust-exhausting systems are of no use unless they are so applied to the work as to really carry off a large part of the dust and deposit it in receptacles where it cannot again work harm. Preferably the suction should draw the dust downward, away from the face of the operator. Many dust-collecting systems suffer from lack of maintenance, or from not being correctly applied to the operation. In one plant visited last year the author noticed that the flue pipe between the inlet and the exhaust fan had opened at a joint so that air drawn in at the working entrance—if any was drawn in—tended to be thrown

[1] President, Willson Products, Inc., Reading, Pa.

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