

REPORT ON INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE IN THE WESTERN ZONE OF GERMANY

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PURPOSE

THIS SURVEY attempts to evaluate present day industrial hygiene practices in the Western Zone of Germany. It had been noted by American public health officials that German practices in this field (five years after the war) were lacking or rudimentary or had regressed to the point of ineffectiveness. This was especially true if viewed in the light of the modern concept of industrial hygiene as a field of public health which embraces the prevention of disease and injury as well as the maintenance and improvement of workers' health.

PROCEDURE

Officials in the health and labor departments of all government units were interviewed. Discussions were also held with those quasiofficial and nonofficial agencies which have an interest in some phase of industrial hygiene. A number of research laboratories were inspected, and educational programs of a few of the leading universities were examined. A representative number of plants, including those in the Ruhr, were visited and industrial medical practices reviewed. Several conferences and meetings on industrial hygiene problems were attended, and a number of round table discussions were held in several cities.

INTRODUCTION

The practice of industrial hygiene in Germany is important inasmuch as that country was one of the leading industrial nations of Europe and is rapidly regaining its former status. Table 1 indicates the total number employed in Western Germany for the second half-year of 1949. Since all workers must be insured in an accident insurance company (*Berufsgenossenschaft*), these figures were chosen as being most inclusive. Accident insurance companies are organized in four large groups either by industry or on a geographic basis.

Industrial accidents are common and occupational disease, particularly silicosis, is of serious significance in the Ruhr and in the porcelain industry. It was unofficially stated in regard to the coal mines that the indemnity paid for occupational disease in 1949 was higher than the indemnity for accidents.

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