Summary

The present situation in the field of industrial safety is one of progress and improvement, largely through the continued application of techniques and knowledge slowly and painfully acquired through the years

There appears to be no limit to the progress possible through the application of the universally accepted safety techniques of education, engineering, and enforcement

Yet large and serious problems remain unsolved A number of industries still have high accident rates While there are exceptions, small industry in general still has not seen the value and importance of a safety program There are still far too many instances where management and labor are not working together or have different goals for the safety program

The total job ahead is at least as great as the job already accomplished In addition to future problems, there are many past problems which remain unsolved

The resources of the safety movement are great and strong—an impressive body of knowledge, a corps of able professional safety people, a high level of prestige, strong organizations for cooperation and exchange of information

Yet there are elements of poverty and weakness in the present situation The very success of the old techniques has a tendency to make the safety profession conservative and overcautious

Some safetymen feel there is less of the old spirit which moved the safety pioneers back in 1912 The average safetyman, they feel, has become "respectable" and is content to do a quietly effective routine job

Others feel that the "pioneer spirit" is still present, that new ideas are being proposed But with acceptance of safety as a part of the industrial way of life, progress is no longer as spectacular as it was in the "old" days

Still the challenges ahead are very great, and no doubt they will be met by modern "radicals," ready to invent and test new departures in safety work and motivation

Current Problems

Some problems of the safety movement are less directly related to present strengths and weaknesses Some of these problems are technological and scientific Some are social and political Still others are essentially organizational

Technology and science

There is no reason for the safetyman to view general technological trends with alarm Emphasis upon automation and more refined instrumentation will probably continue New specific problems will arise, but they will be of a type which well-established methods of safety engineering are competent to solve

The use of new materials—particularly radioactive materials—is likely to present more serious difficulties to the safetyman However, even here, there is considerable experience

The safetyman has most likely had some experience with radiation problems—X-rays and the like Yet he will have to be very fast on his mental feet to handle the new problems that atomic energy and radioactive materials will present in a wide range of industries in the near future

Social and cultural influences

Each generation greets a new kind of "younger generation" The current group, like other "younger generations," is in some ways very different from what went before

More and more young workers have had or expect to have their lives disrupted by a period of military service This necessity has created some instability and restlessness It has also, in many cases, brought a quick maturity of viewpoint

Most young workers are entering industry with more formal education than ever before The concentration of public information into fewer and larger units means that youth will be in some ways conditioned more to single-mold education than previous generations were

It is likely that the approach will have to be made more flexible than ever before, for the instability and quick-maturing processes at work in different individuals will produce a very wide range in attitudes toward social responsibility in general, and safety in particular

Teaching and safety promotion will have to have, at least on the surface, more polish and sophistication, for the audience will be more literate and more conditioned to "slick"