FILE NAME: Industrial Hygiene Foundation (IHF)

DATE: 1943

DOC#: IHF047

DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: Conference Presentation Excerpt

Excerpts from the Opening Address at Industrial Hygiene Foundation, by Andrew Fletcher, Vice President, St. Joseph Lead Co., and Chairman of Foundation's Board of Trustees, presented at eighth annual meeting of Industrial Hygiene Foundation held at Mellon Institute, Pittsburgh, Nov. 10, 1943.

1. Why was the Foundation founded and why should it continue.

About ten years ago our country was in the depths of a great depression, and due to the resultant unemployment, various claims for occupational diseases, such as silicosis, were widespread - companies quickly realized that it was difficult to obtain any competent information as to whether the claims were justified or not; they also awakened to the realization that they had little, if any, data upon which to fight unjust claims, and more important still - if it was found that an occupational hazard did exist, there was no one central place where suggestions could be obtained to lessen the hazard. In the ten years which have passed great strides have been made, due to the knowledge acquired through adversity - the most important development, however, in my opinion, is the acceptance by industry of the fact that improved working and living conditions result in lower costs, and that the dollars so spent in the improvements pay enormous dividends.

In the eight years since the Foundation was founded it has progressed from a struggling and poorly financed group to one of the strongest organizations of its kind in the United States - and one which represents the interests of employee as well as that of the employer by helping to prevent illness and occupational diseases through research in the plant as well as in the laboratory, and by the practical collection and dissemination of industrial hygiene data. Just as I can foresee the greatest era of industrial activity that this country has ever enjoyed when the war has been won - as there is now no doubt that it will be - I see the necessity of an organization such as the Foundation, where unbiased information and help can be readily and inexpensively obtained. The Foundation can be most helpful in the post-war period, when the protection of the health of employees, and possibly even of the consuming public will be even more important than in the past, as with the enormous advances made in chemistry and engineering during the war, unknown hazards have arisen in the development of new products.

The financial position of the Foundation.

There is a great deal of truth in the old saying that nothing succeeds like success - the success of the Foundation, and the insistence of the Board of Trustees that expenditures should at all times be budgeted and supervised, has resulted in a strong financial position.

How the Foundation can help you and the war program.

I would like to make just one suggestion, as our greatest present domestic problem is manpower, let the Foundation aid you by making practical suggestions for lessening of industrial hazards. Although our staff is somewhat limited, we can handle even more plant surveys in 1944 than we did in 1943.