

News and Comment

COUNCIL ON INDUSTRIAL HEALTH OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

News Letter, November 30

The Third Gulf Coast Regional Conference on Industrial Health was held in Houston, Texas, Oct. 12-14, 1950. As quarterback, the Public Health Committee of the Houston Chamber of Commerce received excellent team support from the state and local health departments, Baylor and Texas university medical departments, the safety engineers, the Manufacturers Association, industrial nurses and the industrial health section of the local county medical society. The attendance of around 400 included approximately 15 per cent physicians, 20 per cent nurses, 25 per cent industrial hygienists and 40 per cent representatives of management. Local organized labor had been invited to act as co-sponsors and to participate in the conference but declined. Mr. Harry Read, of the CIO, was present and participated in two of the conference panels.

Dr. R. A. Kehoe, director of the Kettering Laboratory of Applied Physiology, University of Cincinnati, gave a challenging keynote address indicating that there is a job to be done in industrial medicine and hygiene which is going to be accomplished either by the teamwork of private enterprise or by the federal government. He stressed the need for management, labor and the professions to join forces and work out these problems in the typical "American way."

At the luncheon on October 12, Dr. Robert L. Sutherland, director, Hogg Foundation for Mental Hygiene, University of Texas, indicated the importance of bringing the working man, the ultimate consumer, into the planning for services which are designed for his benefit. He stated that most of the antagonisms and negative emotional responses that are encountered throughout society are due to lack of information, misinformation and misinterpretation of situations.

During the afternoon session the need for teamwork in industrial health was discussed. At the banquet Dr. James S. Simmons, dean of the Harvard School of Public Health, gave the principal address, "Health and Manpower in Peace or War." He pointed up the importance of proceeding rapidly with civil defense planning and indicated the pressing need for reevaluating the manpower standards for employment.

On October 13 the morning session was divided into two meetings running concurrently; one group considered the placement of the physically handicapped in industry, while the other group participated in a symposium on industrial wastes and stream pollution.

The luncheon speaker was Dr. Stanley J. Sarnoff, of the Harvard University School of Public Health, who told the story of the development of the electrophrenic respirator. A demonstration of the apparatus followed. The Harvard School of Public Health had a scientific exhibit at the conference entitled "The Air We Breathe," which attracted much interest among those in attendance.

The midyear board meeting of the American Association of Industrial Nurses met concurrently with the conference. The program on Saturday, October 14, was for the industrial nurses. Dr. R. B. O'Connor, division medical director, Loss Prevention Department, Liberty Mutual Insurance Company, gave an unusually interesting discussion of that company's recent efforts in developing small plant industrial health programs. He listed the following prerequisites that are necessary for a successful health unit:

1. Medical department interest in industrial health must go beyond medical care in a "preventive minded" way to forestall accidents and diseases.
2. Medical service must come into the plant.
3. There must be interest and support on the part of management.
4. The primary aim must be to benefit employees.