

Occupational Disease—one resulting from the occupation of the employee—is a danger facing an estimated one-third of Pennsylvania's workers.

More occupational disease hazards are created continually as new processes are developed in industry. A Metropolitan Life Insurance study lists 900 occupations having industrial disease hazards; many kinds of dust and 94 poisons are named.

A partial survey of establishments in Pennsylvania disclosed 672,000 employees exposed to industrial disease hazards. But there has never been any compensation for such injuries. Until January 1, 1938, workmen's compensation will cover only injury by accidents—not physical damage taking place slowly which might cause tuberculosis, insanity, blindness or death.

Dramatic incidents focused national attention on two neighboring states.

A number of young women, painting luminous watch dials, pointed brushes with their tongues and were poisoned by radium in the paint. They did not know the danger until too late.

Men drove a tunnel for a power dam through rock with little or no protection from the silica dust. They did not realize until large numbers died that breathing the dust was almost certain death.

Pennsylvania has many more workers facing industrial disease hazards than both of these states, but wide attention has seldom been brought to specific situations.

Some employers have spent large amounts of money to provide the greatest possible protection by equipment, devices and careful training of workers. But they have had to compete with other employers who ignored the danger, told their employees at first they had minor ailments, and discharged them when they were no longer fit for work.

There was no penalty for the careless employer. The employee had to bear the loss in wages and pay for medical treatment. If he couldn't pay, the public did—by institutional care, relief, or widowed mother's pension.

OCCUPATIONAL DISEASE HAZARDS

