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Bloomfield Recommends Broad Industrial Health Program for Peru

After 3 months of observation in the mines, mills, homes, and schools of Peru, South America, Mr. J. J. Bloomfield, USPHS, recommended a broad industrial health program for the workers of that country. In view of the inadequate housing, sanitation, and education available to thousands of Peruvians, Mr. Bloomfield emphasized the need to develop better living conditions at the same time that industries improve the working environment.

Peru passed a law in March 1947, creating a Department of Industrial Hygiene in the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare. Soon after the law was enacted, through the Institute of Inter-American Affairs, the Minister of Health and Social Welfare requested the Public Health Service to detail Mr. Bloomfield to assist him in studying the industrial hygiene problems of the country and in organizing the new department.

Under the auspices of the Health and Sanitation Division of the Institute of Inter-American Affairs, Mr. Bloomfield went to Peru where he worked jointly with the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and the Servicio Cooperativo Inter-Americano de Salud Publica. That Peruvian industries had serious health hazards was well recognized. However, there was no one source of information which presented a well-rounded picture of these hazards, and it was necessary for Mr. Bloomfield to obtain first-hand information.

Peru's Future

Although Peru is primarily an agricultural nation, its manufacturing industry is growing rapidly, and it is extremely rich in mineral resources. Until recently Peru's high, rugged mountains retarded the development of some of these resources. But in the past few years, a number of good roads have been con-

structed which connect the three important sections of the country, and make good transportation and communication services possible on a national scale. Aviation also is playing an increasingly large role in the communication field.

The study made by Mr. Bloomfield included an investigation of general living conditions in Peru; a survey of industrial hygiene conditions in 21 representative mines, mills, and manufacturing establishments, employing approximately 23,000 persons; and a brief study of official and nonofficial agencies whose work was related to industrial hygiene.

Present Conditions

About 2¼-million people in Peru are gainfully employed, and approximately half of them work at agriculture. About a half million are engaged in industries known to present major health hazards.