

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dr. Robert T. P. deTreville

Since the founding of our organization, industrial hygiene and occupational medicine i.e., occupational health have attempted to introduce the maximum possible degree of scientific logic and measurement into the evaluation and control of industrial plant environments to the betterment of working conditions and human relations.

A most significant development during 1969 has been the NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE WEEK. This Presidential and Congressional act is most gratifying and represents an important step in reaching every citizen with the "good news" of positive accomplishments in environmental and occupational health.

The chief importance of this concerted action on the part of those responsible for our national administration and legislation has been to illustrate the ability of our system to support an idea—however technical and complex scientifically—which involves significant benefit to the great majority of our nation's adult citizens who work.

While industrial hygiene is gaining recognition, steps are also under way to insure that our concern with *protection* of employees from potential adverse effects of their working and living environment is accompanied by similar concern over the *conservation* of their health. Some of the scientific, medical and engineering approaches used in solving environmentally related health problems in industry may also be useful in studying nonoccupational illness, over ten times as common, which is often based on genotrophic or "host" factors, with little or no apparent relation to physical or chemical working environments.

The great majority of illness problems still cannot be dealt with by scientific means and must be handled expediently by those whose medical or technical training or experience provides them a basis for professional judgement; in recent years, however, this situation has been changed by the introduction of improved scientific methods into occupational health practice and research. Most important of these include epidemiology and biostatistics, but automated medical examination procedures are becoming useful in evaluating early alterations in biological functions or measurements which occur prior to onset of clinical disease symptoms in work populations in which internal "norms" have been defined. It is becoming possible to compare many potentially abnormal medical and laboratory findings with "baselines" established previously on workers, and thus to identify and protect individuals most likely to develop chronic diseases and disability of all types, regardless of employment. The effects of personal health and safety habits (such as smoking, unsupervised self-medication, improper nutrition) are now correctly considered important to employee health conservation. In addition, we recognize that the emotional climate at home and at work greatly affects patterns of illness which arise out of failure on the part of employed individuals to cope with their life situations (e.g., the so-called "giving-up/given-up" complex).

Through soundly conceived and managed preventive health measures, the benefits of industrial health are being extended to the maximum practicable advantage of all who work and live in our increasingly technological industrial society.