

THE INDUSTRIAL SAFETY MOVEMENT

In the first decade of the 20th Century, two great industries, railroads and steel, began the first large-scale organized safety programs. From this period comes one of the great and historic documents of safety. In 1906, Judge Elbert Gary, president of United States Steel Corporation, wrote

"The United States Steel Corporation expects its subsidiary companies to make every effort practicable to prevent injury to its employees. Expenditures necessary for such purposes will be authorized. Nothing which will add to the protection of the workmen should be neglected."

The Association of Iron and Steel Electrical Engineers, organized soon after this announcement, devoted considerable attention to safety problems in its industry.

Birth of NSC

Then in 1911, the year in which the Wisconsin Act was passed, a request came from the Association of Iron and Steel Electrical Engineers to call a general industrial safety conference on a national scale. The result was the First Cooperative Safety Congress, which met in 1912 in Milwaukee. This gathering called for another meeting in New York the following year, and at that meeting the National Council for Industrial Safety was organized. Shortly afterward, the organization's name was changed to the National Safety Council, and its program was broadened to include all aspects of accident prevention. Yet it must be remembered that the Council was the creation of industry and

that its activities have always been heavily concentrated on industrial safety.

In a sense, the pioneers who met in Milwaukee and New York were fanatics, extremists. They were a handful—a few professional safety men, a few management leaders, some public officials, and some insurance men. Either through their own vision, or because they worked for some of the minority of farsighted companies, these men were dedicated to a full-scale attack upon a problem which most people thought either unimportant or unsolvable.

These men were fanatics only in their determination and in the purpose and direction in which they worked. They designed and built the organizational structure of the safety movement as we know it today.

Accident prevention discoveries

From tentative, hesitant beginnings, industry moved on to make a series of discoveries. It found that engineering could prevent accidents. It found that employees could be reached through education and brought to a greater awareness of the accident problem and of methods of combating it. It found, by trial and error, that a body of safety rules could be established and enforced.

In thus discovering the "Three E's of Safety"—Engineering, Education, and Enforcement—industry found the means to make a drastic improvement in accident rates. Few reform movements in all history have been able to make impressive gains so

Fig. 1-5. The Workmen's Compensation Service Bureau gave "approval only of the principle" of this protective clothing in their "Universal Safety Standards," dated 1913

