When Local 600 came into existence in 1941, at which time a collective bargaining agreement with the Ford Motor company was signed, we had approximately 80,000 members.

Presently there are approximately 250 full-time union representatives covering the 16 units in the Rouge Plant. Each of the units has nine officers, such as president, vice-president, recording secretary, etc., as well as bargaining and district committeemen. The number of committeemen allocated to each unit is determined by the number of employees in the unit on a prorated basis. All of the units come under the jurisdiction of Ford Local 600.

The war years came close on the heels of the Union's recognition and, of course, production of war materials for our Armed Forces became the principal concern of everyone. But as soon as the fighting was ended and we could once again turn our attention to matters of importance to the workers, "safety on the job" came high on the list of things upon which we would concentrate.

Because we had no formal knowledge in the field of health and safety, training was of prime importance. The International Union of the UAW initiated a course in Industrial Health and Safety at its F.D.R. Summer School in Port Huron, Mich. Safety engineers from the U. S. Department of Labor, Washington, D. C., were engaged to teach the course. In 1946, Local 600 sent five union representatives to the school to take the course—I was one of the five. Later we also took courses which were made available to us by the UAW Health Institute in Detroit and Wayne University.

We were fortunate in having as our instructors, during the course of our study in the field of industrial health and safety, such competent men as:

Lloyd Utter who is presently the UAW director of safety and chairman of the Labor Conference.

Roland Blake, senior safety engineer of the U. S. Department of Labor.

Dr. Swartz, the noted dermatologist.

Dr. Frederick, noted Detroit industrial hygienist.

The late *George Thompson* who was the UAW director of safety.

Alfred C. Funke of Wayne University.

By late 1946, we formed the first local union health and safety committee. This committee in turn organized health and safety committees in each of the 18 units in the Rouge Plant. Here again, through arrangements made by our International Union and Wayne University, classes were set up at our local union headquarters for the newly appointed members of the unit safety committees who were trained to handle problems in their respective units.

In June 1947, Local 600 took out membership with the National Safety Council so that it could avail ourselves of the Council's invaluable advice and other services.

Late in 1949 our health and safety set-up was finally given official recognition by the Ford Motor company. Credit and thanks for this recognition must be given to Manton M. Cummins who was then manager of labor relations and has since been elevated to the position of assistant general manager of industrial relations. Fortunately, Cummins is a broadminded person and had the foresight to realize that a joint labor-management safety committee would be beneficial to the company, as well as to its employees. As a result of our receiving recognition, a health and safety agreement was reached and a grievance procedure was established on September 28, 1949.

My quickly relating this sequence of events may have misled some of you into thinking that the Ford Motor company agreed to this joint union-company safety program merely because we asked for it. Well, it wasn't that easy. It took considerable time and some heated discussions to convince the company's representatives that we were sincere about wanting to make the Rouge Plant a safer place in which to work. And, despite the fact that this program has been in effect for almost a decade, we still on occasion have heated discussions with the company's representatives in our efforts to get some points across. But it is now obvious to all that this close cooperation between the union and the company has paid off because the frequency rate of accidents has dropped 86 per cent and the severity rate dropped by 69 per cent.

In 1950, when Carl Stellato was first elected President of Local 600, one of the first things he did was to establish a health and safety department in the Local Union.

President Stellato appointed me as director of that department upon its inception, which is still my present assignment. As the director, I am on 24-hour call and many is the time that I've been awakened from a sound sleep in the wee hours of the morning and asked to investigate an accident in the plant.

As I stated before, a health and safety grievance procedure was established for the purpose of handling the workers' complaints in an orderly fashion; there are three stages in the procedure. The first stage provides that the committeeman should first attempt to settle complaints by discussing them with the immediate supervisor. If a satisfactory solution is not reached, the committeeman refers the matter to the union safety director in the unit who takes it up with the general supervisor. If a solution is still not arrived at, the unit safety director must reduce the complaint in writing and submit it to the zone labor relations office. That office has the complaint investigated by the company safety department, the industrial hygiene department or plant engineering.

When that investigation is completed and a report made to the zone labor relations office and the plant manager, a meeting is arranged with the Union's unit representatives for a complete discussion of the problem. Should all of these steps of the first stage of the grievance procedure fail to resolve the matter, the second stage provides that the unit representatives must process a formal grievance and submit it to the local union health and safety director.

The safety director of the local union investigates the complaint to determine its merits and arranges a meeting with the central labor relations office; the representatives of the unit involved also participate in this meeting. If the company's disposition in this stage is not satisfactory, the third stage provides for an appeal to the Ford department of the International Union.

If in the opinion of the International Union's investigator the grievance has merit, he makes arrangements for another meeting with the central labor relations office. Should the matter not be corrected as a result of this meeting, the International Union can then give the Ford Motor company a 12-day strike notice. I am most happy to say, however, that we have settled hundreds of health and safety grievances in the Rouge Plant and have never yet had to resort to giving a strike notice and we sincerely hope we shall never have to. However, we feel it gives us a measure of security knowing we have this recourse should it become necessary.

It may seem unsavory to speak of strike action in connection with health and safety but, believe me, we would make certain we were right before we would take such action. No one is permitted to in any way play politics with health and safety nor do we pursue a health and safety complaint just to appease someone. We obtain all the facts and if we think one of our representatives is wrong—we tell him so.

A recent example of this was a Union representative's complaint about excessive carbon monoxide in his building. Upon taking a reading, I found it below the requirement of the state's regulations. He disputed the reading on the carbon monoxide meter and felt the workers under his jurisdiction were subjected to a terrific health hazard, and he was ready to process the grievance through all stages of the procedure. While we were in the office discussing the matter, he was puffing away on a cigarette. So I took a carbon monoxide reading of the smoke he was producing with the cigarette and showed him that it was much higher than the reading taken in the work area in question. That not only convinced him the grievance had no merit but almost made him become a non-smoker.

On the other hand, there have been occasions when a hazard was discovered which required immediate attention and we deviated from the health and safety grievance procedure by telling the employees on such unsafe job not to work until it was corrected.

Labor today has a responsibility to its members and the community to play a much bigger role in accident prevention than ever before. It is not our intention to take upon ourselves responsibilities which belong to management—we only want to work with management to make factory work as safe as possible.

Those members of management who discourage and decline the Union's offer to participate in their safety program as a joint labor-management endeavor either have no foresight or they are ignorant of the facts because, as we all know—*safety is everybody's business!*