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TUESDAY MORNING SESSION

October 6, 1936

The first session of the Food Section was called to order by General Chairman C. W. Dempsey, Liquid Carbonic Corp.,

Chicago, who presided. Chairman Dempsey welcomed the delegates and introduced the speakers.

Safety and Health in Food Handling

By WILMER H. SCHULZE, Ph.D.

Director, Bureau of Environmental Hygiene, Baltimore City Health Department

While accident prevention programs have been effective in the reduction of loss of life and limb in our industrial population, there exists another field of activity which requires the cooperative interest of all engaged in safety work, namely, the health of the industrial worker. At present health programs in many plants have a status comparable to the safety program of some years ago. Such a state of undevelopment is only natural, however, when it is considered that bodily injuries resulting from accidents are usually instantaneous and the cause is generally evident and corrective or preventive measures can be applied in most instances.

On the other hand, injuries to health are seldom apparent within a brief period, and frequently it may be months or years before unhealthful working conditions exhibit detectable injury to the employees' health. The time is now opportune for focusing attention upon those factors in industrial environments which have a direct or indirect effect upon the workers' health. National health and labor officials, State departments of health and labor and some municipal health departments are giving the matter of industrial health serious consideration.

For a number of years the staff of the office of Industrial Hygiene and Sanitation of the United States Public Health Service has been carrying on studies of those industrial environments which react unfavorably on the health of workers. The publication of the data pertaining to these investigations has stimulated an increased interest on the part of health officials, labor departments and industrialists.

The United States Public Health Service has recently completed the collection of data in the field as part of an Occupational Morbidity and Mortality Survey conducted on a nation wide basis. The statistical data obtainable from this survey will no doubt furnish valuable information and guidance for the future establishment and development of industrial health programs.

During the early part of 1936 the Division of Standards of the United States Department of Labor conducted the first Training Course for State Factory Inspectors in Baltimore, with the cooperation of the Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health, and the assistance of the Maryland State Accident Commission and the Baltimore City Health Department. The course consisted of a series of lectures and field inspections covering accident prevention and health protection in industry. Similar courses will be offered to other groups of factory inspectors in other sections of the country. This training of State industrial inspectors in the recognition and means of correction of accident and health hazards will no doubt increase the value of the services of factory inspectors to industry.

Both State and municipal health officials are awakening to the fact that in order to guard the health of the community they cannot ignore industrial conditions. Connecticut has a well established Bureau of Occupational Diseases in the State Department of Health. In a number of other States progress is being made in the establishment of industrial hygiene services, either in health departments or in departments of labor. The Health Department of St. Louis, with the guidance of the United States Public Health Service, recently completed a survey of representative industries in that city to determine the existent potential industrial health hazards.

In the Baltimore City Health Department a group of industrial hygiene inspectors devotes its entire time to the study of health hazards in local industrial plants. This service has been extended by the establishment of a Bureau of Occupational Diseases under the direction of a physician with industrial hygiene experience. As a result of these technical and medical services, plant officials have welcomed visits to and studies of working conditions with subsequent discussions and recommendations in connection with any health hazards found to exist.