ACTIVITIES OF STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES IN INDUSTRIAL HEALTH

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PRESSURE of added duties has caused many public health administrators to remark that, like Alice and the Red Queen, they have to keep running in order to remain in the same place. This statement can be applied particularly to the industrial hygiene segment of the public health program. Originally, governmental industrial hygiene agencies were concerned solely with giving medical and engineering services to control and prevent diseases of occupation. Today, industrial hygienists have to assume seven-league boots to keep pace with new technological advances and other industrial developments that are related to, but may not be concerned exclusively with, occupational disease control. This area of responsibility is further broadened by the accepted concept that the worker's health is a total entity.

How well the governmental industrial hygienists have measured up to this task, while at the same time continuing with their routine activities, is presented in this report. The information is taken from annual reports of activities of 40 of the 59 state and local agencies for the 1949 calendar or the 1950 fiscal year. This report does not cover all types of activities carried on by these agencies since summaries, discussing over-all programs and objectives, have been published in the past.[1] Present emphasis, therefore, will be on illustrative activities which help to make up the 41,000 different field services provided approximately 4 million workers in a year's period, and the extent to which the state and local agencies are coping with industrial health problems of national scope.

For a better understanding of the work of the agencies, attention is called to their still relatively small, though widespread, organization. At present there are 59 state and local agencies,[2] employing a professional personnel of 412 members, mainly physicians, nurses, engineers, and chemists. The size of this staff can hardly be considered adequate to cope with the health problems of 62 million workers in this country. Despite attempts at expansion, however, the number of personnel has remained fairly static over the past four years. Further staff increments have not been realized, because of several factors. For one thing, large industries, universities, and research organizations have made continuous inroads on the trained personnel of the governmental industrial hygiene agencies. Economy drives of some health departments have further reduced the personnel. At present, demands of the

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1. Trasko, V. M.: The Work of State and Local Industrial Hygiene Agencies, Pub. Health Rep. **64**:471 (April 15) 1949; In Industry's Service, Occup. Med. **3**:392 (April) 1947.

2. Since a list which properly identifies these offices is appended, they will be referred to in the text chiefly as divisions.