

THE INDUSTRIAL SAFETY MOVEMENT

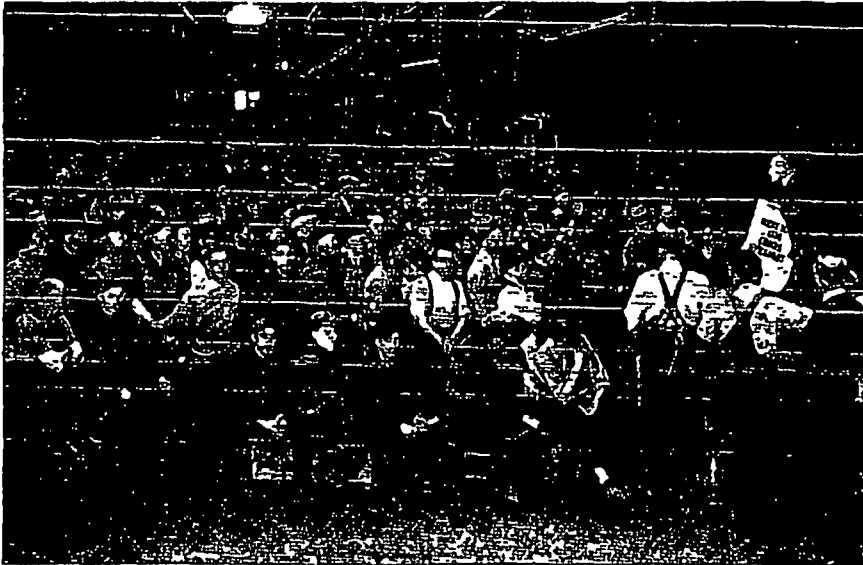


Fig. 1-2 The employee safety meeting was pioneered about the same time the National Safety Council was organized. This safety rally at the Falk Company, Milwaukee, was made more effective by use of flip chart (right) as visual aid.

dustry and society. On the moral side, there are two related premises: the first, that needless destruction of human life is, of itself, evil; the second, that failure to take precautions against predictable accidents involves serious guilt.

These two aspects of the industrial accident problem—the practical and the moral—are not easily separated, for waste is a moral failure, and sound morality finds expression in practical realities.

There could, of course, be no real development of industrial safety philosophy until industry began to approach its modern stature. Although the medieval master probably tried to instruct apprentices and journeymen in the safe use of tools and safe work procedures, it was the technological advance known as the Industrial Revolution that created conditions in which accident prevention could be considered as a specialized field of knowledge. Now were unleashed tremendous forces for production. Without checks and safeguards, these forces produced death and injury on a scale that was bound to challenge conscience.

This challenge could not be accepted at once, for ways of thought on matters of social responsibility changed more slowly than did the technology of production.

By the first decade of the 20th Century, enlightened industrial management had accepted responsibility for the suffering caused by accidents. In that decade, the National Association of Manufacturers was studying most carefully the European experience with workmen's compensation laws, which held industrial employers responsible for a share of the economic loss that accidents caused to workers.

From the acceptance of financial responsibility developed a philosophically more advanced premise: that a large proportion of accidents are preventable, and that industry could and should utilize some of its technical manpower for the prevention of accidents.

In adopting this premise, industry discovered, almost from the start of the modern period, that concern with safety produced efficiency, and that concern with efficiency should include concern with safety.

Intelligent concern with safety demanded