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1954 TRANSACTIONS
VOLUME 6

Current Safety Topics in the

**CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY
AND
PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT**

*as presented in sessions of the Construction and Public Employee
Sections at the 42nd National Safety Congress*

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Construction Section Summary Report

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The program committee chairman, Mr. Lupinski, introduced the guest speaker, who was Kenneth McFarland, Educational Director, American Trucking Association, Inc., Topeka, Kansas.

Mr. McFarland gave a very inspiring talk on the subject "The U in Business." No attempt is made here to summarize his excellent discussion covering such vital factors as:

The Human Factor in our business relationship is vital. He clearly illustrated that it is the human factor, the "you" in the business of safety programs which makes them a success or failure. Skill and know-how should not and cannot be substituted, but they must be supplemented by personality traits. It is not enough for us to *know something*, we must *be something*. A few of the vital personality traits emphasized include:

1. Industriousness.
2. Loyalty.
3. Graciousness.
4. Courtesy and good manners.

"He shall be the greater among you who can serve others best."

It was an excellent discussion on the qualities of leadership.

A new safety film "If You Took Your Family to Work" was shown. It is an excellent film taken on an actual construction project in Chicago. It is well done, and it should prove to be very valuable for safety meetings on construction projects throughout the industry, particularly for building contractors.

Following the film showing, the separate reports of the executive committee chairman were presented. In each case these reports were brief, but it can be factually stated that each committee has some very worthwhile project underway and that considerable work has been accomplished this last year. No attempt is made in these minutes to give a copy of these reports because they were not written reports, but short summary, informal reports. A summary of the reports are as follows:

Mr. Medsker and his engineering committee reported on several projects that are being developed.

1. *Standard Signs for Highway Traffic Control:* A suggested form has been developed under Mr. Medsker's leadership for both traffic and general driving control. Mimeographed copies of the suggested standard were distributed.

2. *Safety Training Course:* A special course to be taught at the college level is being developed by the Engineering Committee. Mr. Medsker thanked the many members who had made valuable contributions in the development of this course.

3. The Visual Aids Committee reported that special commendation was due the Caterpillar Tractor Company for their unusually fine cooperation with the committee by producing a second outstanding Safety Film, and that it would have its world premier showing at the Congress on the afternoon of October 20th. It was pointed out that the Construction Section felt very indebted to the Caterpillar Tractor Company for producing these two safety films, because this company has rendered an outstanding service to the construction industry. The investment by Caterpillar in producing these two non-commercial safety films has been considerable, but it should prove to be an inspiration to other manufacturers to make similar contributions.

4. Data and publication committee. Robert L. Jenkins, chairman, pointed out that considerable progress is being made in developing another construction five minute safety talk booklet. He thanked everyone for their valuable contributions, with special thanks to his own hard working committee members. This booklet will be completed during the coming year.

The AGC-NSC joint membership agreement had a successful first year and plans are underway for continuing it another year. Approximately 3,000 contractors are incorporated in this program.

Our new general chairman, George P. O'Rourke, Sr., gave a brief acceptance address including recommendations to the executive committee for the coming year. These recommendations included the following suggestions:

1. All projects now underway by the com-

mittees should be brought to a successful conclusion.

2. Explore the needs of the industry and concentrate on the problems and projects of most general need by the largest number of contractors.

3. Particular attention should be paid to the needs of the smaller contractors.

4. Carry on an educational program as individuals to interest other contractors in

joining the Construction Section in order that we may represent all of the industry and can thus render a greater service to the industry.

5. Everyone should give more consideration to sending in good material to the *Newsletter*.

6. The Visual Aids Committee should strive to produce a building construction safety film.

Where Do You Begin A Crusade?

By WILLIAM G. HAWKINS

Insurance Mgr. and Safety Dir., Winston Bros. Co., Minneapolis, Minn.

If I were to point my finger at you and say, "You are responsible for the murder of 38,300 persons in 1953," you would say, "Who me?"

That would be my reaction too. But the fact is, that you and I, as private citizens, are responsible for murder on the highways every day of the year. "Who Me?"

Yes, you. But you and I say, "I never have had an accident," or "I never drive over the speed limit," or "I have my brakes checked every six months."

We disclaim any responsibility for automobile accidents happening every hour of the day, every day of the year. Too many of us are still yawning in the face of a mounting tragedy.

Too many of us get all hot and bothered about a multiple death train or airplane crash in some distant place while blinding our eyes to the day-to-day traffic deaths right at home. Too many say, "It won't happen to me—somebody else maybe, but not to me." We are infected with that W. Earl Hall of the Mason City, Iowa, *Globe-Gazette* calls "otherfellowitis."

Paradoxically, traffic safety today is an unglamorous subject. We have been dulled by the constant repetition of headlines and news reports of deaths in an automobile. Hardly a newspaper is published that doesn't carry one or more stories about auto accidents. We read the headlines and pass on to the next article. Only, if the victim's

name sounds familiar, or if there is some other point of recognition, are we interested. For the most part, the subject of highway fatalities is as dull as a worn out razor blade.

And in our disinterest, the statistics have become sickeningly sufficient evidence of our guilt as murderers. Last year, 38,300 persons were killed—38,300 living persons—people in the prime of life—25, 35, 45 years of age—persons who were fathers, brothers, sons—persons who were important as employees, wage earners, businessmen, home owners.

Almost every day this year, some young father finishes his breakfast and gets into his car to go to work. Maybe he kisses his wife and pats his little girl on the head. It's not a goodbye because he expects to be home that evening.

But he never comes back. He becomes a highway fatality. A husband, a home, a future for three or more vital Americans is rubbed out. That's just one accident's toll. There were many more.

Or maybe he was lucky. Maybe he was only injured and will be able to get back to work in a week, or a month or a year. Maybe this one who got killed was in the other car. There were 1,350,000 persons who were not killed in 1953—only injured or maimed for life.

And the cost—for wage losses, insurance, medical expenses and property damage—was a staggering \$4.3 billion.

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Do Workers Resist Safety?

(A Panel Discussion)

Discussion Leader: DR. K. F. KAPOV, Medical Dir., Armour and Co., Chicago, Ill.

Participants:

DR. HERBERT K. ABRAMS, Medical Dir., Union Health Services, Inc., Chicago, Ill.

JOSEPH MASON, Personnel Consultant Caterpillar Tractor Co., Peoria, Ill.

DR. ALFRED P. SOLOMON, Associate Clinical Prof. of Psychiatry, University of Illinois, Chicago, Ill.

MARIAN ROSEN, Industrial Dept. National Safety Council, Chicago, Ill.

DR. ABRAMS:

Accidents result from multiple factors in the inter-relation of the individual with his environment. Disabling injuries vary generally with the nature of the environment. That is, the highest rates occur at work, next in public places and last at home. More accidents occur among low income groups living in substandard housing, etcetera. More work accidents occur between 10-11 a.m. and 3-4 p.m. than at other times, etcetera.

At work the accident rates will vary with:

1. The general work conditions (higher rates occur during war-time, attributed to accelerated work pace, longer hours and fatigue, crowding of equipment, new and untrained workers, relaxed controls). Industrial injury rates follow more or less closely the curves of employment and business activity.
2. The industry: For example, mining, lumber and construction have highest rates. This does not mean there are more accident prone workers in these industries, but rather the environments in these industries are more hazardous.
3. The occupation: Production workers have higher rates than clerical workers, etc.
4. The conditions in the individual plant: Plants in the same industry vary, in their accident rates, depending on their policies and programs in industrial hygiene, medical program, attitudes of supervisory personnel, etcetera.
5. The training of the worker for his job.
6. The proper placement of the worker: For example, poor hearing or vision may re-

sult in accidents in a job requiring high efficiency of the sensory organs.

7. The general composition of the work population: rates are higher among younger workers and males. (This obviously is closely related to the types of work and hazards.)

There are many factors which play a part in determining the success or failure of a safety program in industry. Comparable plants in the same industry will differ in their degree of success, depending upon these factors.

1. Most fundamental is the necessity that the employee knows what he is doing, appreciates the potential health hazards involved in his job, and knows how to protect himself and his fellow employees against these hazards. No one could rationally disagree with this statement, yet we know that in all too many situations employees are not adequately informed or trained for their jobs.

2. The worker must be provided with the means to carry out safety measures. In other words, management must provide a safe and healthful place of work equipped with modern safeguards against accident and disease hazards. Again, this is a point on which no one will disagree and yet we find in numerous industries that all is not being done which could be done to achieve a safe and healthful place to work.

3. Personnel, employment, and production policies must be in accord with principles of good health. For example the pace of production should be such as not to cause fatigue . . . a well recognized factor in the cause of accidents. Supervisory personnel should be intelligent, should like people, and should themselves provide an example of good safety and industrial hygiene practice. Recently workers in a plant in which there is a good deal of dust tell me that although the plant has a fairly good dust collection system, it frequently suffers mechanical breakdowns. When these occur, management refuses to stop production until repairs can be made so that the workrooms fill up with dust within a few minutes. In another dusty industry, a system of incentive pay resulted in discouraging use of respirators on the

part of ill-informed employees. These are examples of conflict between management and good health practices.

4. Employers should provide adequate first aid and medical services on the plant premises or close by. Medical services should be preventive as well as therapeutic.

5. Opportunity should be provided for rank and file employees participation in the health program. Pontification and exhortation from above will never do the job. A working man or woman is a human being. He or she needs the opportunity at self expression, at participation, at job identification and job satisfaction. Moreover, the man on the job sometimes knows better than we about the specific work problem. Let us learn from him too. This means the establishment in each plant of a safety and health committee in which democratically chosen representatives of the employees participate. The man on the job often has ideas and should be asked.

I think that if all of these points are taken seriously and carried out, we can look forward to significant reduction in industrial accidents.

JOSEPH MASON:

Efficient, productive work without accidents or injuries has for many years been a goal of our company and of industry in general. One of the mottoes of our company which is frequently quoted by our management people is, "Safety is always our No. 1 business."

In our organization no amount of effort, money, or interference with production has been spared in order that we might provide for our people as nearly safe working conditions as are humanly possible. This program has been successful and much of the credit for its success is due the people of our safety division.

Its success is apparent in our safety record for accidents and lost-time injuries have been progressively fewer during recent years. On several occasions the company was given the "Award of Merit" by the National Safety Council and in 1952 and in 1953 Caterpillar Tractor Company was the recipient of the "Award of Honor" from the National Safety Council for its excellent safety records.

During recent years it has been apparent that we might be approaching what would

appear almost to be an irreducible minimum so far as protecting the individual from the machine by mechanical devices. This prompted our safety people and medical people and management, in general, to give greater attention to the human factor in accidents.

Man has always excused himself from responsibility for his injuries by saying that accidents "just happen," but we have found that the persons who repeatedly injure themselves also seem to have other kinds of difficulties—they have more trouble getting along with their fellow employees and with their supervisors, they have frequent minor sickness absenteeism, they report to First Aid stations more often with minor complaints, and in many other ways it is evident that they have more trouble and suffer greater misfortune than does the average employee. This has led us to believe that an accident record is only one manifestation of an inadequate method of living.

With the wider acceptance of psychology as a science and the consequent development of psychosomatic medicine a new appreciation of the possible causes of accidents and a better understanding of employee attitudes toward safety is apparent. Accidents, the causes of which were previously considered to be beyond the control of the individual, are now thought to be related to his psychophysiological makeup. It does not seem to be just a question of the blame being attributed to either the environment or the individual. To engage in a controversial discussion along these lines would be similar to attempting to settle the age-old question of heredity versus environment. What we believe is necessary is a full appreciation and understanding of the importance of adjustment between the individual and the working environment.

We are all conscious of the many ways in which people differ. That we all differ in our physical characteristics is readily apparent for we need only glance around the room and we see persons with differing color of eyes, different facial features, different color of hair, and so forth. It is also true that there is a wide range of individual differences as regards our psychological make-up.

It is our contention that considerable improvement can be effected in human adjustment by a more careful consideration of the