

Congress

in the program it was found that rotation of employees from jobs with high noise levels to less noisy jobs was not the solution. The company finally turned to an ear-muff program. At first there was great resistance to wearing the devices due to discomfort. "We listened, adjusted, talked, counseled until that time came when we had improved our adaptation to a point that complaints of the product stopped completely," Haluska said. The highest compliment paid the hearing program came from a hammer-shop employee who told Haluska. "You know yesterday for the first time in a long time I could hear my son's voice when I got home from work."

Speaking before the Glass and Ceramics Section, J. S. Sharrah, Occupational Health Services, Pennsylvania Manufacturers' Association Casualty Insurance Co., gave a brief recap of workmen's compensation decisions in hearing loss. "Prior to 1948, hearing loss was not regarded as a significant factor in workmen's compensation," according to Sharrah.

Partial hearing loss due to noise was ordinarily not compensable. Subsequent decisions in New York, Wisconsin, Missouri, Maryland, and Georgia have significantly broadened the scope of compensation. In the 1962 case in Georgia, the court ruled "that the loss of hearing was the cumulative effect of a succession of traumatic injuries suffered by each sound impulse in the air. The court allowed the claim and accepted the medical evidence presented whereby it was stated that a 51 per cent impairment represented a total loss of industrial use of the ear."

One of his listeners asked Sharrah "Since noise is something that has just recently become important as a compensable work injury, what do you recommend companies do to limit their liability—in all probability they have not given audiometric tests to workers, and so can't present proof that hearing loss

isn't a result of work in their plant. Now, an employee comes up with less than normal hearing and a compensation claim. What do you do?"

Sharrah said the best defensive steps depend on the size of the company. In large corporations noise level surveys are being conducted, and these can furnish proof that exposures have been below permissible limits under the law. In little companies, "it is still likely they can afford audiometric readings. The real problem is in the 50 to 100 man operation—let's say a little foundry—obviously they can't have a staff person do readings and surveys. But, their insurance company will often offer services of this kind, as will certain state government agencies. Sometimes associations of such small shops or plants can provide noise measurement services."

In response to another question Sharrah pointed out that one of the benefits of pre-employment audiometric tests is identification of per-

sons with subnormal hearing as being less likely to suffer further hearing loss than a person with acute hearing. "Such a person," Sharrah said, "is actually a better employee to put in a noisy operation. Certainly there is no ground for discriminating against the applicant with loss of hearing."

Dr. Aram Gilrig, director of the Subcommittee on Noise, Research Center, told the labor sessions that sometimes one of the best protectors against hearing loss is overlooked—that is, rest between exposures. If a worker is able to get away from a noisy environment periodically, he will give his hearing mechanism time to recover from temporary damage. When the ear has no time to recover from the temporary damage due to noise, the damage will become permanent and irreversible.

Gilrig was not optimistic about the chances of engineering noises out of machinery to the point where it would not endanger hearing. "You can control noise in a drop hammer, but no one can operate it when you get through," he said. He concluded that many noises can be controlled to a degree where they will not be nearly so damaging, but very few can be controlled so that there is no problem so far as hearing loss is concerned.

Seeking Ways To Motivate

HOW DO YOU MOTIVATE an employee to be safe?

Three practitioners in the research and application of motivational principles tackled that question in a special session that packed the Grand Ballroom of the Hilton Hotel.

Participating in the session, presided over by W. E. Stuffing, director of safety, Carrier Corp., were Richard O. Peterson, training research supervisor, American Telephone and Telegraph Co.; M. Scott Myers, director of development, Texas Instruments, Inc.; and Ingo Ingenhol, director, psychological services, Middle West Service Co.

While there was consensus that safety, as it relates to the individual worker, needed to be looked at "from the inside out," the three speakers differed considerably in

their appraisals of what, if anything, could be done to enter into the needs and experiences of the worker and make him want to be safe.

According to Peterson, since safety is "asking something new of the worker, he must be convinced that the new material is worth learning." He noted the crucial role of "meaningfulness" in the learning process as it operates to help the employee see how a given safety measure relates to him and his job.

In pointing out the dangers of making a safety message too broad, Peterson called for a high degree of specificity in order to make the message "logical" to the worker in terms of his past experience.

He stressed the value in studying "near-accidents" as objective and nonthreatening sources of safety information, since "it's necessary to

demonstrations neglect to jeopardize important his hearing practice important. Peter might of safe jobs as at the the cit. Citi ment—to be r eording ately: I mport form o nition of a sys ing pre quency suited program job, h mport Peterso. Mye similar that he ditions faction. Sinc tion as on the and o cordin organi provid ing or sibiliti subdiv that c isly as. It's satisfy needs, benefit dition since orient. My isfacti quires pany, practi ness inform a nee booki cation dispe.