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OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

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Governor's Conference Held -

The Pennsylvania Governor's Conference on Pneumoconiosis (Anthraco-Silicosis), which has been announced in previous issues of News & Views, was held in Harrisburg on November 30, December 1 and 2. Called for the purpose of reviewing the pneumoconiosis problem in the Pennsylvania coal mining industry and making recommendations for the reduction and prevention of the disease, the Conference was attended by over 300 leaders in this field, including representatives of the medical profession, labor, industry and government.

Governor William W. Scranton, addressing the opening general session, called for a new look into the practices of compensating coal miners disabled through employment-connected lung ailments and suggested a study of compensation of those who are not totally disabled and who can perform other work. "In order to correct this, fair and effective disability evaluation is needed which should be followed by rehabilitation and retraining of partially disabled miners. The prevention of the disease must be heavily stressed", he stated.

Special sessions of the Conference were devoted to Preventive Programs with Regard to the Individual; Dust Control; Disability Evaluation; Rehabilitation; and Workmen's Compensation Legislation.

Among fifty-four speakers who participated in the Conference were Dr. John Rogan, Medical Director, National Coal Board of Great Britain; P. B. McCrodon, Manager, McIntyre Porcupine Mines, Timmins, Ontario; and Dr. J. E. Cowle from the Ontario Department of Health.

It is hoped that, through implementation of recommendations formulated as a result of the Conference deliberations, a comprehensive program of pneumoconiosis prevention and control will be established in Pennsylvania.

The Conference was jointly sponsored by the Pennsylvania Departments of Health, Mines and Mineral Industries and Labor and Industry. A grant-in-aid was received from the Public Health Service.

Manganese Poisoning -

Two cases of manganese poisoning were recently investigated by the Division. To our knowledge these are the first cases in Pennsylvania since the 1930's and the first in manganese steel workers. Prior cases have been in miners and ore crushers. A new process of carbon-arc burning of manganese steel castings

had been introduced. It was carried out in a four-sided booth without local exhaust ventilation. The regular worker on each of the two work-shifts developed manganese poisoning.

Industrial hygiene survey showed significant manganese exposure at the worksite. Both men had typical symptoms and signs of manganese poisoning and elevated urine manganese concentrations. They were immediately removed from exposure and were placed under treatment with calcium EDTA. They seem to be improving. Urinary excretion of manganese increased markedly following EDTA administration.

The manganese exposure at the worksite was reduced immediately by use of respirators. Adequate local exhaust ventilation was installed shortly afterward.

Industrial Hygiene Course -

In cooperation with the Graduate School of Public Health, University of Pittsburgh, and the U.S. Public Health Service, the Division of Occupational Health will conduct a basic course of instruction in Industrial Hygiene. The two-week course is scheduled for May 1965 following the Annual Industrial Hygiene Conference at Houston. Although the sessions are intended primarily for industrial hygienists and industrial hygiene chemists recently appointed to positions with the Pennsylvania Department of Health, five other persons can be accepted. If you are interested in attending this course, please apply promptly to E. J. Baier, P. O. Box 9, Harrisburg. There is no charge.

Short-Term Limits -

In our last issue we announced that Article 432, Regulations Establishing Threshold Limits in Places of Employment, had been revised by the Advisory Health Board. Included in the revisions was the adoption of short-term limits of exposure for 38 substances. For your information we include with this issue of News & Views a supplementary sheet listing the substances for which short-term limits have been adopted.

Probable Berylliosis From Beryllium Alloys -

The report of a study on this subject appeared in the October 1964 issue of the Archives of Environmental Health. Authors of the paper are Jan Lieben, M. and John A. Dattoli, M.D., of the Division of Occupational Health, Pennsylvania Department of Health and Harold L. Israel, M.D., of the Sarcoidosis Clinic, Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia. Three cases of probable berylliosis from working with low beryllium content alloys are reported. Reprints of the paper are available upon request to News & Views.

Conference on Asbestos Hazard -

An international conference on the "Biological Effects of Asbestos" was held in New York City October 19-21, under the auspices of the New York Academy of Sciences. Speakers from South Africa, Canada, England, Italy, Finland, Ireland, and Germany presented discussions of cancer in asbestos workers and in persons living in the neighborhood of asbestos plants. It is now generally agreed that mesothelial tumors are much more prevalent among those exposed to asbestos than among the general population. This view was substantiated by several of the speakers who presented pertinent case histories of persons who had worked with asbestos as far back as World War I.

Publications -

"Occupational Diseases, A Guide to Their Recognition", a reference book to aid physicians, consultants, industrial hygienists, and allied professional personnel in the detection and control of job-related illnesses has just been released by the Division of Occupational Health, Public Health Service, U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

The book, Public Health Service Publication No. 1097, was prepared by eight experts in the field of occupational health and edited by Dr. William S. Gafaeir. It covers the three major categories of occupational hazards -- chemical, physical, and biologic. Special diagnostic tests and recommended threshold limits

re listed under chemical hazards. Occupations associated with potentially harmful environmental agents are also listed. Basic information on the mode of entry of various hazards and their effects in the body are also explored in the text. Because of their importance in occupational health, separate sections on skin irritants and sensitizers, pneumoconiosis, and pesticides have been prepared. There are also sections on plastics and synthetic resins and plant and wood hazards. Suggested treatments for job-related diseases are not covered in the book.

As an additional aid, "Occupational Diseases" concludes with a listing of sources of consultation on occupational health and industrial hygiene problems and a basic reference list.

The 375-page text book is available for \$2.25 from the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.

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The Council on Occupational Health, American Medical Association, 535 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois 60610, has available some very valuable pamphlets on all aspects of Occupational Health. Send for the catalogue entitled, "Publications of the Council on Occupational Health". From this list, you may select any booklet which is of interest and one free copy of each will be sent to you.

Visitors From Abroad -

Several visitors from other countries have been guests of the Division during recent weeks. Dr. W. D. Buchanan, Her Majesty's Deputy Senior Medical Inspector of Factories, Great Britain Ministry of Labor, was here after appearing as a speaker at the international asbestos conference. He conferred with central office staff members and also inspected an industrial radiation installation in the Pittsburgh area. - Dr. Muriel L. Newhouse of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, London, England, spent two days in Harrisburg prior to presenting a paper at the international conference on the hazards of asbestos. During her visit Dr. Newhouse was escorted on a tour of an asbestos-processing plant. - Three industrial hygienists from India, Messrs. Roy and Gupta and Dr. Chakravort, visited the central office to discuss mutual problems in occupational health. - Mr. A. Trevor Jones, Chief Industrial Hygienist, Department of Public Health, Sydney, Australia, was also a guest. He spent considerable time with members of the industrial hygiene staff and concluded that most occupational health problems in Australia are not significantly different from those experienced in Pennsylvania.

Respiratory Protection -

Our recently published Hygienic Information Guide on the subject of Personal Respiratory Protective Equipment presents a summary of general information concerning this important topic. A copy of this Guide is included as a supplement to our current issue.

Unwarned is Forearmed -

The veracity of the well-known Boy Scout motto "Be Prepared" is evidenced by the following incident. One of the Division's industrial hygienists inspected a relatively small milk processing plant some months ago. During the course of the inspection it was noted that ammonia was used in the refrigeration unit but that no one had anticipated what would happen should a leak develop in any of the many pipes, joints and fittings inherent to the system. The plant manager was advised to obtain an ammonia gas mask as a precaution against such an emergency. This he did immediately. On a recent reinspection of this plant the manager beamingly thanked the industrial hygienist for his prior recommendation. One of the pipes had sprung a bad leak and, by donning the mask, the manager had been able to shut down the equipment and thus avert a possibly serious accident. Incidentally, he bought two more ammonia gas masks. Are you prepared?

Dental Laboratory Study -

A study of more than 50 dental laboratories has recently been completed in order to define the possible health hazards associated with this occupation. Primarily, these firms are engaged in manufacturing acrylic dentures, with some

laboratories performing gold crown casting and a small number casting cobalt-chromium alloys. One laboratory was found to be working with Ticonium, an alloy containing beryllium.

Acrylic denture manufacture involves the use of methyl methacrylate (an acrylic monomer) and a few cases of dermatitis were reported. The dermatitis problem is controlled by transferring sensitive employees to other work areas and/or the use of protective skin creams.

Atmospheric sampling at the cobalt-chromium alloy casting operations indicated that exposures are far less than the respective threshold limit values (1 mg of cobalt and 0.1 mg of chromates, as CrO_3 , per cubic meter of air, based on exposure over an eight-hour working day). Silicon dioxide is used as an investment material for this casting process. Since the amount of time spent working with these materials is short and only small quantities are utilized, it is thought these operations do not present a serious health hazard.

Personnel Notes -

Recent appointments to the central office staff include: Dr. Vernon I. Spitznagle, Industrial Hygiene Physician; Dr. Donald L. Bottomley, Physician II; Don Hamner, Radiation Health Physicist III; Jordan S. Davis, Radiation Health Physicist I; Frederick H. Vonder Heiden, Chemist II; and Margaret A. Reilly, Chemist I. Gerald Kazmerski and Edward Zehler are new Industrial Hygienists I in Region VII, Philadelphia. P. G. Rentos has been promoted from Industrial Hygienist to Industrial Hygienist III with transfer from Region III (Meadville) to the Central Office. A. M. Stang, Industrial Hygienist III, has resigned.

In Memoriam -

Edward R. Aston, D.D.S., 67, a member of the Division's staff since 1951, died on November 29. As Industrial Dental Consultant he conducted many studies of dental hazards in Pennsylvania industries and was one of the founders of the American Association of Industrial Dentists. He served as secretary-treasurer of the organization for several years. More recently his duties were those of a radiation specialist with primary concern for the radiation hazards presented by operational dental and medical X-ray equipment.

Occupational Health Nursing -

Many of the occupational health nurses have inquired as to whether the Good Samaritan Act might be applied to the emergency care given in the plants.

At the 29th Annual Meeting of the Industrial Hygiene Foundation, Dr. Sidney Shindell, who is a physician, an attorney, and an expert on medicolegal matters, spoke on this topic.

Dr. Shindell stated that, in his opinion, the Good Samaritan Act would have no application in an industrial health facility where emergencies are expected and for which preparation is made.

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Legal Aspects of Hearing Programs - Leo G. Doerfler, Professor of Audiology, University of Pittsburgh, in a recent talk to occupational health nurses stated that nurses or technicians who do audiograms must have special training. He cited an incident in which litigation against a large steel company was won by several employees when the audiograms which might have proved the hearing loss was present when hired, were thrown out of court because the nurses who had done the audiograms had not received special training.

The University of Pittsburgh conducts a one-week course in audiology for nurses and technicians. This course is given twice a year.

The occupational health nurses may wish to bring this matter to the attention of management.

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The Southwestern Pennsylvania Association of Industrial Nurses is conducting a survey to determine if occupational health nurses are interested in attending workshops or seminars and to ascertain what aspects of occupational health