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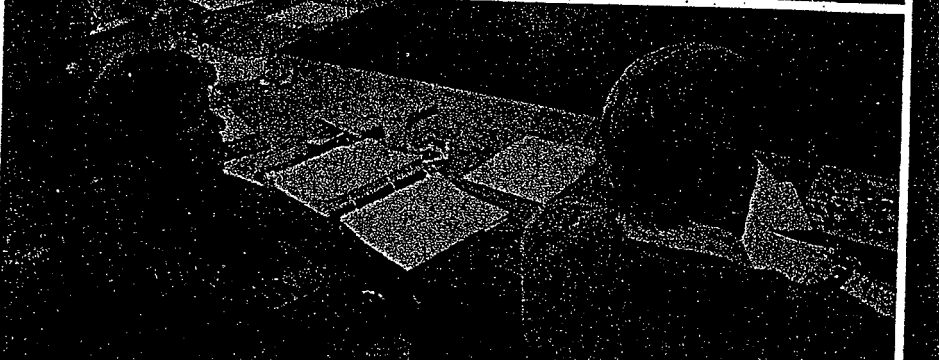
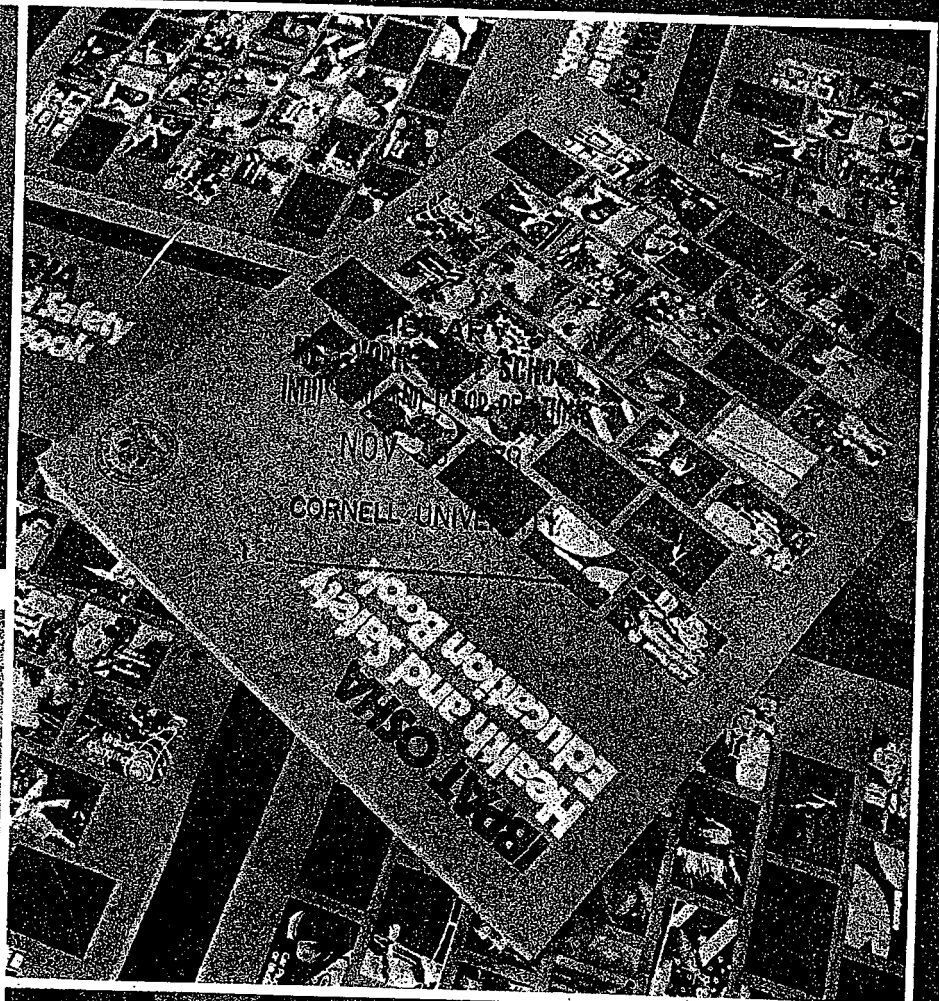
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NOVEMBER 1978



Job Safety and Health: GR's to Deliver the M

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Painters & Allied Trades Journal

On the Cover

General Reps are set to deliver the IBPAT safety message. Story, page 4.

NEWS AND FEATURES

page

Inside Front Cover	From the General President
9	What Troubles YOU the Most?
10	AFL-CIO Holds Safety Conference
13	Why "Right-to-Work" Laws Mean Less
31	The General Secretary-Treasurer Reports

DEPARTMENTS

page

15	Local and District Council News
20	Davis-Bacon Forum
25	Sports and Recreation
27	Financial Report

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Any member or subordinate body publishing programs, souvenirs or other documents of any description must not designate them as "The Official Journal of the Brotherhood," or as "The Painters and Allied Trades Journal," either upon the publication itself or their advertising contract forms or stationery.

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Study Ties Cancer to Industrial Hazards

From 21 to 38 percent of all cancer cases in the United States may be traced to toxic agents and industrial poisons that workers are exposed to on the job, a new and expensive government study concludes.

The grim findings were included in a report disclosed by Sec. Joseph A. Califano of the Department of Health, Education & Welfare at the AFL-CIO's National Conference on Occupational Safety and Health.

Quoting from the report, Califano said that at least 20 percent of cancer incidence may be work-related, but he stressed

'At least 20 percent of cancer incidence may be work-related.'

that even that estimate is probably too low.

A draft summary of the study by HEW's National Cancer Institute and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences exploring the link between cancer and exposure to occupational carcinogens states:

"The total excess incidence would be from 21 to 38 percent. We choose to use the figure 20

percent in order to be conservative."

The study refutes previous estimates often cited by industry groups in opposing stronger exposure standards that only 1 to 5 percent of all cancer could be attributed to occupational factors. The government epidemiologists concluded that these estimates "had not been scientifically documented."

The report points out that most

'Most cancers resulting from . . . carcinogens will occur late in life.'

cancers resulting from exposure to carcinogens will occur late in life and that many studies detect only a small fraction of early-developing cancers.

While noting that there may be no single cause of cancer, the study found that asbestos will lead to the deaths of many workers.

"Past exposure to asbestos is expected to result in over 2 million premature cancer deaths in the next three decades," the report said, adding that it would account for about 17 percent of cancers detected annually during those years.

The researchers pointed out that 6.5 million to 8.5 million workers had been exposed to significant levels of asbestos dust since the 1940s and that many of the 4 million who encountered heavy exposures would die of lung cancer, mesothelioma or gastrointestinal cancers.

"The total fraction of heavily exposed workers likely to die of these cancers is probably between 35-44 percent," the report said.

The report also cited the high risk ratios for various cancers

linked to worker exposure to arsenic, benzene, coke oven by products, chromium, iron oxide, nickel and petroleum distillates.

Although exposure has been reduced for some industrial carcinogens in recent years, the report pointed out that there are still many unregulated cancer-causing substances in American workplaces.

In commenting on the findings of the new government study, Califano stressed the need to focus health and safety efforts on prevention. He noted the federal government will spend \$4 billion on health care this year, but less than \$2 billion on prevention of diseases.

Califano said that an effective prevention program in the workplace makes both medical and economic sense. He pointed out that millions of workdays are lost to occupational injuries and disease, adding that \$11 billion was paid in workers' compensation claims in 1976 alone.

"Yet most of the arguments

'Past exposure to asbestos is expected to result in over 2 million premature deaths in the next three decades.'

against occupational health and safety measures focus on costs," he said. "It is myopic to argue that programs to protect workers are inflationary if we do not count in our calculations what those programs buy: safer health and often greater productivity."

'It is myopic to argue that programs to protect workers are inflationary.'



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