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A Report on the "Week of Prevention" held in the Dillinger Foundry and organized by the superintendent of personnel, Peter Hartz.

"WE HAVE REALIZED A DREAM"

The Trade Unionists: The Dillinger Foundry in the Saarland has conducted a seminar on "The Week of Prevention", what was its purpose?

Peter Hartz: The reality of risk factors encountered by the labour force, world-wide, continues to threaten the health of the workers. We tried to put an informative package together for my co-workers that is to inform about health protection and work-safety. Also, the need to recognize the greater risks taken, the greater the work-load in a given situation.

We have, therefore, made available for you x-ray examinations, eye- and ear examinations, blood tests, tetanus shots. The blood tests will determine the blood pressure, and the blood group of every co-worker and, where needed, will provide him with an emergency I.D. Personal data, such as weight, age and lifestyle, were put into a computer facilitating immediate information on the state of well-being of the examined.

DG: A program like this ought to be provided as part of a systematic medical service, available to the workers daily.

P.Hertz: It certainly is part of the work force. Our medical service has been with us for 20 years. All work-connected incapacitations are routinely and thoroughly examined. The specific reason for holding "The Week of Prevention" was, to provide an opportunity for the medical staff

to get to know all employees and to educate them on the priorities and the actual application of preventive measures. Our suggestions were well received and, after explaining about the confidentiality of the questionnaires we were able to obtain a great deal more information then would have been possible during the brief visits in a work-day.

PROMOTING GENERAL INTEREST IN HEALTH-CARE

DG: Who could and who should participate in these examinations?

P.Hartz: Everybody, beginning with the management down to the workers. Although the specific ailments were of primary concern -- by stressing this we wanted to draw the employees' attention -- , there was also education on the general upkeep of health.

DG: Were medical examinations carried out during working hours?

P.Hartz: Yes. Employees able to leave their job at a given time could come to be examined. All work sections were notified beforehand to cooperate. This program ran for 10 days so that, the nightshift workers also could be accommodated.

All were invited, if they wished to do so, to browse through the displays and to enquire about the goals of the program.

DG: What were the other goals of the program?

P.Hartz: In a tent, especially provided for this purpose, there were displays of informative materials available located on 20 different tables. Here, the employees were able to get information on work-safety, preventive health-care, protection of the environment, education and continuing education as well as re-education. One table provided information on how to submit suggestion concerning company issues. Another stand was put together by the management. Even the members of the board of directors had their own table.

Not only did they report on their functions in the company, but also introduced a new type of drink for those working in heating plants, and which had been put to test recently.

DG: How many employees visited the "Week of Prevention"?

P.Hartz: We employ 5200 people and looked forward to an active participation which was, after all, on a voluntary basis. The attendance exceeded our dreams. Approximately 80% of the employes attended.

DG: How will the information, obtained during this prevention week, be utilized?

P.Hartz: It will give us certain clues concerning our employees. If an employee is found not to be up-to-par healthwise, we will suggest further visits to the company physician. He will then be given a medical plan to assist him with the medical regimen .

DG: Let's assume that the examinations show a considerable number of shift-workers incapable to hold down their shift-work because of poor health and that they really should not be working. What happens then?

MOBILIZATION OF CO-WORKERS

P.Hartz: Then it is our task to re-locate the co-workers. Our company has provided for such emergencies. That is to say, that under these directives we are able to contact our co-workers be they recently employed, on a temporary basis or our regular employees, and re-locate them to a more suitable place of work.

Under these same guidelines fall also employees who are handicapped and whose work output has decreased. It is the company's policy to re-locate them to positions commensurate to their state of health and their physical ability.

DG: Will this "Week for Prevention" serve as a new approach ?

P.Hartz: You are quite right. We believe, that it is imperative and necessary to mobilize the employees in the interest of health protection. In order to achieve this, they have to be included in the discussions concerning the decision-making processes by management.

Many employees have yet to contribute their ideas that would provide constructive suggestions and criticisms valuable to management. These may include suggestions on investment policies, production policies, on the general managment of the company and its organization policies.

This "Week of Prevention" was organized at this time foremost, with the employees in mind.

Photographs

p.7 Table with information provided by the members of the board of directors

p.8 Assistance in emergency: First-Aid must be taught

Demonstration of various products for the protection of ears

Test on resistence against fire demonstrated on various work clothes