

OFFICE OF WAR INFORMATION

Film Branch

NOTE: The following information is being sent to you as a supplement to the War Information Manual. Its purpose is to give further amplification to the Government's war program, and to provide material for short subjects and feature pictures. If more detailed information on the subject is desired, it will be furnished to you, on request, by the Office of War Information. Should you wish to use this material in your short subject or feature program, kindly communicate with this Office in order to avoid unnecessary duplication.

INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS HELP THE AXIS

THE PROBLEM: 1,500,000,000 MAN-HOURS LOST

In 1941, more than one and one-half billion man-hours were lost as the result of on-the-job accidents in United States industries. Translated into production terms, this means the loss of 375 destroyers ... or 190,000 light tanks ... or 75,000 fighter planes ... 15,000 heavy bombers. It is the equivalent of a major victory for the Axis.

America is not accustomed to losing battles, but the battle of production is being fought by an army that is suffering frightful casualties. The battle of production may well be lost, for there are simply not enough reinforcements to fill the ranks.

WAR INCREASES THE HAZARDS

The loss of man-hours in 1941 was 30% above the loss in 1940. The reasons are obvious. War demands call for tremendously

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increased production. Millions of men have been added to payrolls of factories and shipyards. At the same time each man is called upon to work longer hours...to produce more per hour than ever before. And this in spite of the fact that a great percentage of the new men hired are inexperienced...have never worked in a factory before ... have no previous knowledge of the dangers involved in handling heavy machinery. Green men are not hired by choice. They are hired because every experienced man is working or has been drafted.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ACCIDENTS?

Industrial accidents don't just happen; they are caused. The conventional alibi of negligent factory managers that a careful worker is never injured has been proved false by cold statistics. Only 15% of all accidents are caused by carelessness alone, while 17% are caused by hazardous working conditions with no personal carelessness whatsoever. The largest percentage of accidents are the result of a combination of: (1) lack of knowledge or skill and (2) hazardous working conditions.

THE PERSONAL FACTOR AS A CAUSE OF ACCIDENTS

The new worker is the one most likely to be hurt and hurt badly. At first glance there appears to be no trick to the operation of the most complicated machine. If he sees the dangers involved, he is likely to ignore them. Safety rules apply to others, not to

him. In short, he is a menace -- to himself, to men working near him, and to the efficient operation of the plant. He is a mechanical illiterate, and he must be educated. This is the job of the foreman or of the instructor.

A good foreman never permits a new man to operate a machine until he understands it thoroughly and until he understands that safety rules are for the protection of everyone and must be obeyed. The careless or reckless worker presents a problem in discipline. A brief lay-off without pay, even if it means a loss in man-hours, is the best cure for the smart-aleck.

HAZARDOUS WORKING CONDITIONS

There are hundreds of working hazards. They vary with each industry and each plant. Defective machinery ... insufficient mechanical guards ... overcrowding ... poor ventilation ... or merely the wrong approach to a given mechanical problem ... these are but a few of the hundreds of reasons why workmen are sent to the hospital. Every single one of these hazards can be eliminated by safety engineering, by constant vigilance and inspection, by a determination on the part of management to safeguard the lives and health of workers.

HOW TO ELIMINATE ACCIDENTS

It is simple to determine the cause of an industrial accident. It is just as easy to eliminate the cause -- if management is resolved to do so. Safety engineers have reduced the problem

to three basic principles, known as the "Three E's" - Education, Enforcement, and Engineering.

Education can be handled in various ways, from simple, patient instruction in the mechanics and hazards of a given operation, to dramatic, "object lesson" dramatizations of what happens when safety rules are ignored. Some plants give periodic tests, and the most progressive urge workers to report every hazard.

Enforcement means that workers are compelled to abide by safety rules, with fines and layoffs meted out to those who are negligent. A welder who is docked for failure to use his goggles is not likely to make the same mistake again.

Engineering is the most important and the most expensive. It calls for the services of one, a dozen, or a hundred safety experts. It calls for constant inspection, regular replacement of worn or faulty equipment, and the willingness to change an entire production set-up, if necessary, to eliminate a hazard. But whatever the cost in money, it cannot equal the cost to the war effort of increased casualties on the production front.

DECLARATION OF WAR

President Roosevelt has declared war on the foremost enemy of our production effort -- the ruinous loss of manpower through industrial accidents. He has requested the National Safety Council to mobilize and lead an attack on the accident menace. Federal Security Administrator McNutt has pointed out that it takes 18

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industrial workers to equip one fighting man. He estimates that the country needs ten and one-half million additional workers in war production. Therefore no man, no single lost hour, can be spared from the gigantic task ahead of us.

DRAMATIZING THE ACCIDENT MENACE

The annual toll of industrial accidents runs into figures so astronomical that their very size discourages any attempt to grasp just how much they hinder our production effort ... how much they help the enemy. Factory owners and managers, foremen, workers and ordinary civilians, even if made to comprehend, in concrete terms, the significance of the industrial accident rate, have no uniformly clear picture of why accidents happen, what causes them, how they can be avoided. This is a job in visual education, a provocative dramatic subject for motion pictures.