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LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

**UNIONS,
MANAGEMENT, AND
INDUSTRIAL SAFETY**

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
BULLETIN

Editorial Note

The Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations was established in 1946 to "inquire faithfully, honestly, and impartially into labor-management problems of all types, and secure the facts which will lay the foundation for future progress in the whole field of labor relations."

The Institute seeks to serve all the people of Illinois by promoting general understanding of our social and economic problems, as well as by providing specific services to groups directly concerned with labor and industrial relations.

The *Bulletin* series is designed to implement these aims by periodically presenting information and ideas on subjects of interest to persons active in the field of labor and industrial relations. While no effort is made to treat the topics exhaustively, an attempt is made to answer the main questions raised about the subjects under discussion. The presentation is nontechnical for general and popular use.

Additional copies of this *Bulletin* and others listed on the last page are available for distribution.

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Director

MILTON DERBER
Coordinator of Research

DONALD E. HOYT
Editor

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UNIONS, MANAGEMENT, AND INDUSTRIAL SAFETY

By JACK STRICKLAND

Industrial accidents keep happening.

In Illinois in 1949 they happened for the last time to more than 300 people. These people were listed as "industrial fatalities" in the Department of Labor's annual report. The industrial fatalities happened in mining and manufacturing, in transportation and construction, in the trades and services, and in the agricultural industries. They happened in finance, real estate, and insurance, and in forestry and fishing. They happened nearly everywhere that people work.

That is where they happened.

This is how they happened:

Automobiles and trucks put 64 people into the fatality column. Other vehicles accounted for 28 more fatal accidents. Electric apparatus — including motors, conductors and cables, and other equipment — added 25 more people. Other machines killed 11. Falling coal killed 37 in mines. Floors, steps, ladders, platforms, and other working surfaces were involved in 30 more industrial deaths.

Add these: 27 for elevators, hoisting apparatus, and conveyors. Four for boilers and pressure vessels. One for hand tools.

That accounts for 227 of them. People became a part of this total in other ways. Animals, chemicals, hot substances, and even dust accounted for their share.

The total — and the *where* and the *how* — shows that there are not many jobs so safe that a man, or a women, or a child working at them cannot become an industrial fatality.

Not every person injured on the job became a fatality.

More than 48,000 people are listed as "injuries" in the Illinois Department of Labor report for 1949. To be listed as an injury a person must meet two requirements:

1. He must be working in an industry covered by Workmen's Compensation.
2. He must be off work for a week or more.

Many of the people who were hurt or killed in industrial accidents did not meet these requirements. Some were working in establishments which were neither public employment, nor defined as "extra-hazardous," nor voluntarily under the coverage of the Workmen's Compensation Law. These people did not meet the first requirement. Others were off work for less than six working days as a result of an accident and so did not meet the second requirement.

The 48,000 and more who met both requirements were hurt in the same industries and from many of the same causes as were the fatalities.¹

When Illinois accidents are added to those in the rest of the states, and the total is divided by time, there is another measure of the importance of the accident-in-industry:

“One American worker is killed or crippled every four minutes. One is injured every 16 seconds.”²

These figures represent one kind of cost. Another kind has also been estimated for the state and for the country. The cost each year in Illinois, as quoted by Governor Stevenson in a public letter,³ is \$110 million dollars.

Estimates vary for the country as a whole. Secretary of Labor Tobin put it at four and one-half billion dollars each year, for both labor and employer, at the President’s Conference on Industrial Safety in March, 1949.⁴

The Committee on Accident Records at that conference estimated the cost to *employers* alone at over three billion dollars, with the cost to *employees* perhaps equaling that figure.⁵ The total depends on just what costs are included. The doctor’s bills are usually put in. So are the totals of Workmen’s Compensation payments and estimates of production losses. The losses to a family which has suffered a stoppage of income, or a lessening of it due to an injury or death of a breadwinner must be guessed at, and sometimes are not considered in statistical reports.⁶ But the total is big, in any case. It is big enough that the addition or subtraction of a billion dollars, or even two, does not reduce or enlarge the importance of the problem. If the smaller figure is taken, if the suffering of the injured and the misery of the dependents of the “injuries” and the “fatalities” is only guessed at, there is still enough evidence to show one reason for taking action on the problem. The evidence helps to explain why many employers are convinced that accident prevention is good business from the point of view of economics and humanitarianism as well as from the point of view of employee and public relations. It helps to show why many labor unions have taken an active part in forming and participating in plans designed for reduced injuries to their members. It underlines the importance of industrial safety in a period when the nation needs each man and each work hour for defense production.

To state the size and importance of the problem of the accident-in-industry does not give all of the reasons for taking action to reduce it. If industrial accidents “just happened” there would be little basis for action. But behind each injury, behind each entry in the fatality column,

a cause can be found. Experts believe that 98 per cent of these causes can be controlled or eliminated.⁷

That is why the safety engineers, statisticians, administrators, educators, and the safety-minded legislators, and the union, management, and public representatives, could set for themselves the goal of cutting national industrial accidents in half within three years. The goal was set at the President's Conference in March, 1949. It was affirmed as the goal for Illinois accident reduction at the Governor's Conference in May, 1950. If the goal is achieved, industrial accidents will be reduced to one million in the nation and 24,000 in the state by 1952.

Fifty per cent is not 98 per cent. But a glance at the record will show that it is an ambitious goal. The lines which represent the number of deaths and injuries on Charts I and II do not move steadily, but their direction is mostly downward. The year 1947 recorded more accidents and deaths than the year 1948. There was no explosion at Texas City, Texas, in 1948. There was no Centralia disaster in Illinois. Estimates show that the line will move downward again in 1949, the year the 50 per cent goal was set. It must move downward even more sharply if the goal is to be reached by 1952. And if long working hours, machine deterioration, and the pressures of increased production add to the hazards of work as much during the period of increased defense production as they did during the war period, the goal will not be easy to reach.

Steps to Fifty Per Cent

Some of the methods and programs which are being used to reach the goal will be outlined and discussed in this section.

Accident prevention methods are the basic weapons in the attack on the industrial accident. Three of them are especially important:

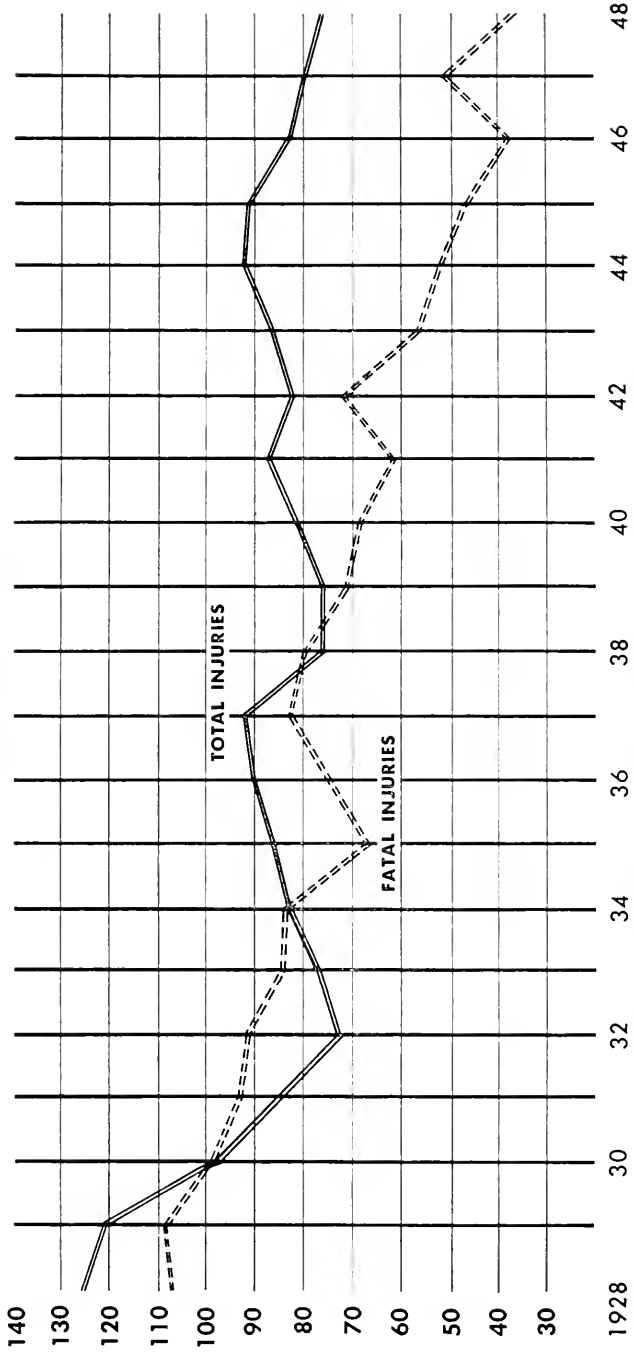
Safety engineering is the method which attempts to make it impossible for a worker to be injured on the job. It covers the entire physical aspect of a working area. Safety engineers set up standards of safe speeds, safe plant layout, safe methods of machine operation, and safe design of the machine itself. They devise guards and other protective equipment to be used in operations.

Accident investigation and research are important aspects of safety engineering. Engineering research can erase the causes of injuries. Statistical analysis of accident reports can serve the purpose of locating precise trouble spots so that remedies can be applied; it can aid an establishment or industry to learn its position in regard to accidents and to observe the progress of a safety program.

According to the safety engineers, operations can be made safe enough

CHART 1

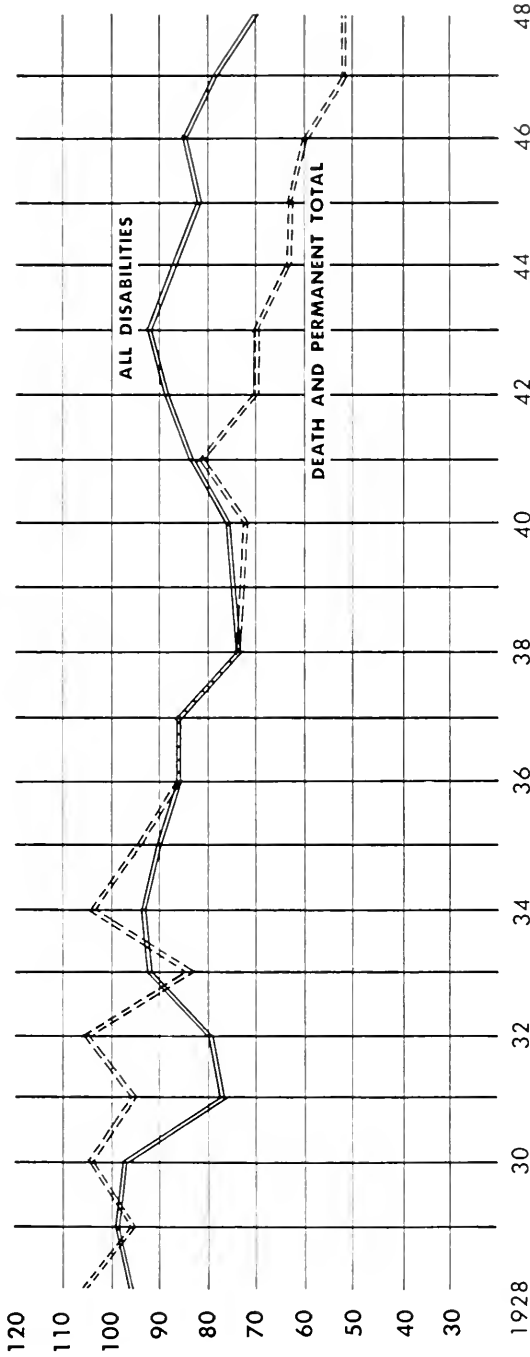
**Index of Injuries Reported in Illinois per 100,000 Employed
Non-Agricultural Workers — 1928-1948
(1928-32 = 100)**



Source: Annual Report of Industrial Accidents in Illinois, 1948. Part 1.

CHART 2

Industrial Injury Frequency Rates in Manufacturing by Types of Disability (1926 = 100)



Source: U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bulletin 945.

that machine-failure accidents can be “reduced to the vanishing point.”⁸ There are two “buts” that need to be added to this statement. The first is that, in Illinois, about 70 per cent of the establishments “are not reached by any organized program applying tested safety techniques.”⁹

The other “but” is that machine-failure accidents are a small part of all industrial accidents, according to some experts. The exact percentage of man-failure accidents cannot be determined, since most accidents combine a failure of both a man and a machine. Estimates vary. Some experts attribute less than half of all accidents to man-failure. Others contend that man-failure is involved in 70 to 80 per cent of all industrial accidents.¹⁰ Whichever figure is defended, safety engineering has an important and obvious part to play in the safety program.

The important place of engineering in the plant safety program is shown in another way besides whatever reduction it accomplishes by itself. According to the engineering committee at the President's 1949 Conference, “this phase of the safety work must be carried out with a high degree of effectiveness before an employer can reasonably ask his employees to do their share in accident prevention through adherence to safe practices.”¹¹ Or, as one management representative stated: “Management must keep faith by furnishing something more concrete than lip service to their employees and to the safety program.”

Safety education is aimed at the other side of the accident problem and is as important to safety engineers as the physical aspects of the working area. The purpose of safety education is to make the supervisors and line employees safety-minded. It is used to convince the supervisor that management believes in and wants safe production — and then to show him how to get it. It is used to convince the employee that by working safely he is working wisely — and then to show him the way to work safely. It is also used by the employee himself to advise supervisors and management of the safe work practices he has learned through experience or of unsafe conditions he has observed. Such things as proper indoctrination, orientation to the safety rules and objectives of the plant, and the use of handbooks are part of the education process. Training for safety begins when the employee is hired and continues during the life of his job.

Promotion is designed to arouse and maintain interest in safety. There are many ways in which safety-mindedness is promoted. Printed materials such as magazines, posters, books, handbooks, and film are common. Large plants in safety conscious industries have their own sources for these things. Additional materials are available to these plants and to those which have no other sources from the United States Division of

Labor Standards, the National Safety Council, and from Industry Safety Councils.¹²

Employee participation programs are also used as educational aids. These programs include suggestion systems, plant or department safety contests, safety awards, and worker safety and first aid courses. Technical school and university extension programs are also directed at safety education and publicity.¹³

Safety programs put the basic methods of accident prevention to work. Safety methods are put in action in several ways:

National and state conferences, such as the President's conferences in 1949 and 1950, and the Governor's conference in 1950, stimulate interest in the problem of industrial safety. They direct attention to problems of improvement in method and make specific recommendations for action.

State and Federal safety laws, like the conferences, have broad objectives. They specify minimum standards and serve as a floor on which more elaborate programs can be built. In Illinois, the State Labor Department has the legal authority and responsibility to carry on a safety program. This program includes inspection, promotion, and education. Workmen's Compensation and Occupational Diseases Acts also serve to promote safe plant practices.

Industry codes are on a voluntary basis. They also include minimum standards of equipment and conditions. The American Standards Association has compiled these codes for many industries, and the codes have been approved and put into effect.

Union-Management industry conferences are also designed to consider broad safety problems and to work out improvements in standards or methods to meet problems unique in the industry.

Plant safety programs bring accident prevention methods to the people most directly concerned with safety—the individual worker and the individual management. This is the phase of the safety program with which we will be most concerned in this bulletin.

UNION-MANAGEMENT SAFETY PROGRAMS

The Committee on Labor-Management Cooperation for Safety adopted in 1949, and reaffirmed in 1950, a statement of premises and principles for the President's Conference on Industrial Safety.¹⁴ A similar committee at the Governor's Conference in Illinois in 1950 adopted these same premises and principles.¹⁵

The President's Committee recognized three patterns of labor-man-

agement cooperation for safety. One pattern is a joint safety committee or safety council comprised of representatives of the company and the union, whether or not the agreement specifically provides for it. Another kind is the unionized company or plant in which the safety program is organized and conducted by management with worker cooperation without the use of a joint union-management committee. The third pattern covers the nonunion plant with worker cooperation in the safety program.

The members of the committee also agreed that the problem of industrial accidents can be solved only by full cooperation between the employer and the employees. Their report stated that there must be genuine participation on the part of all levels of the management and employees in building and stimulating the safety efforts of the entire organization. This will produce understanding, pride in results, and appreciation of the sincerity and good faith of each party to the program.

There were three principles which the committee called fundamental:

1. The primary legal and moral obligation for safety lies in the employer's hands. His interest must be sincere and continuing in providing for the safety of his employees.
2. It is the moral obligation of every employee to cooperate in the safety program.
3. The welfare of the employees in unionized plants places an obligation upon the union to cooperate in accident prevention, within the framework of participation that the parties have agreed upon.

This bulletin is concerned primarily with the first pattern — union-management cooperation for safety, through a Joint Labor-Management Safety Committee. The setup and operation of these committees will be described. The results achieved with the Joint Committees and the opinions of some of the people who have participated in them will be presented. We will also consider briefly the place of safety in collective bargaining. These things are the main purposes of this bulletin.

Safety in Collective Bargaining

Safety provisions in contracts cover a wide area. Some specify safe standards and appliances. Included in this group are contract provisions which call for protective clothing guards, air cleaning equipment, and other devices. Some clauses provide assurances that the employer will abide by local, state, or Federal safety laws. Others provide that workers will not be required to work in unsafe places, that safety rule violations will be reported to the union, and that sanitary locker and washrooms will

be provided. Continuous union participation in the plant safety program is sometimes provided by clauses calling for joint investigation of accidents and union cooperation in enforcing safety regulations. The Joint Safety Committee, which will be considered in more detail in the next section, is sometimes provided for in the contract, but it is often set up without formal provision.¹⁶

Joint Safety Committees

There are two main kinds of Joint Committees. Both kinds have one thing in common; they include representatives of management and representatives of the employees. The difference between the two kinds is that some committees have employee members who are union representatives. Others have employee representatives who may not be union members. Since the main purpose of this bulletin is to consider union-management cooperation on the safety problem, most attention will be paid to the first kind. Much of what is said, however, will apply equally well to either kind of committee. In some cases, the evidence which we will consider will not distinguish between the two kinds.

Where Joint Committees Are Found

The idea of the Joint Union-Management Safety Committee is not new. The International Association of Machinists and the United Mine Workers of America have had contracts providing for such committees for many years. The committees are not common throughout industry, but in certain places, like steel, paper and pulp, and coal mining, they occur often.¹⁷

In addition to these industries, clauses providing for Joint Committees are found in the contracts of the United Automobile Workers, the Industrial Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers of America, the United Rubber Workers of America, the United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers, the Textile Workers Union of America, the International Woodworkers of America, and some others.¹⁸ Some of these unions, such as the United Automobile Workers, have arranged for their members to take technical training in safety to make committee work more effective. Others have international and regional safety directors and committees which do educational and consultative work.

Organization of Joint Committees

The organizational setup of Joint Committees varies. They are sometimes set up on a department basis, with a committee for each department. Sometimes there is just one committee, with members selected

from among all the departments in the entire plant. There is a third kind which is a combination of these two: Sub-committees are set up in the departments of the plant, and representatives from this sub-committee compose the plant committee.¹⁹

The amount of participation which is provided for the Joint Committee also varies. In some cases, the Joint Committee acts only as an advisor to management which retains most of the responsibility for policy and techniques. In other plants, there is joint determination of policy and technique, and the union helps to enforce and make penalties for violations of rules which have been set up.²⁰

Members of the Joint Committee

Management representatives on the Joint Committee usually include foremen, a safety engineer or director, and a personnel director. Union representatives are sometimes union officials or stewards, and nearly always also include nonoffice-holding union members. Union representatives sometimes must meet certain requirements. Often, they have to be employed in the plant at least a year before they are eligible. The United Mine Workers make fifteen years the eligibility requirement, with an age minimum as well. Changes in membership are made in some committees every six months. Other committees provide for a change every year, and in only a few does tenure last longer than this. The purpose of such rotation is to give more people in the plant a chance to serve on the committee. Employee members may be elected by the union membership, or appointed by union officials. Sometimes, nominations of committee members are made by the union, and the management chooses from among the nominations the people who are to be members of the Joint Committee.²¹

Functions of Joint Committees

Joint Committees are a fairly flexible approach to safety, and they vary in other ways besides organization and membership. The functions of such committees range from reporting hazards and offering suggestions to active participation in a long list of safety work. Following are some of the ways in which the committees work for safety: they develop safety programs covering employee instruction, safety devices and safety guides; make inspection tours of the plant to check on bad housekeeping, unsafe practices, unsafe equipment; hold formal hearings and help to discipline rules infractions; administer the safety education program and award contest prizes; participate in programs promoting out-of-plant safety, and form health and sanitation plans.²²

From the above list it can be seen that the Joint Committee can be a useful program for putting the methods of safety engineering, accident investigation, and safety education to work for accident prevention. The Division of Labor Standards indicated the scope of the committee's work when it said, "The Safety Committee's work does not stop with the correction of unsafe, unsanitary and unhealthful conditions of work, and the development of safe methods of work. There is the basic task of arousing the interest of all workers in the plant in safe working conditions, developing in each of them a feeling of personal responsibility for safe work practices and enlisting their cooperation in carrying out the committee's safety program."²³

EXPERIENCE WITH JOINT COMMITTEES

Joint Safety Committees have been in existence long enough now to tell something about how they are coming out as accident prevention aids. Let us look at the experience they have had.

The measure which is used in the following studies is the frequency rate. The frequency rate is merely the average number of industrial injuries for each million employee hours worked. There are other ways to measure the effectiveness of a safety program, since accident prevention includes such things as making less severe those accidents which *do* occur, but the frequency rate is adequate for our purposes.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Studies

The U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics has made a series of studies on the causes of injuries and accidents in specific industries. In two of these reports, they have included figures which show something about the kind of safety programs in the plants studied.

In the Bureau's study of the fertilizer industry,²⁴ the Joint Committee's record looks somewhat better than the record of committees composed of supervisory workers only. When the average accident frequency rate is computed for both kinds of committees, the Joint Committee's record of 31.5 compares favorably with the supervisory committee's record of 38.2. The importance of the safety engineer is also stressed by the study. Those plants which employ a full-time safety engineer have a considerably better record than do the others, regardless of committee setup. The best record of any type of program was made by plants with a full-time safety engineer and a Joint Committee. The frequency rate of that combination was 12.9, while a Joint Committee without an engineer had a high rate of 35.9, and the highest rate of any setup was made by the supervisory committee alone with 40.1 as its frequency rate.

There are many things which make it difficult to decide how important safety committees have been in this industry. The Bureau of Labor Statistics has pointed out that: "The value of safety committees could not be clearly demonstrated from the available data, primarily because there was no information regarding the relative activity or inactivity of the respective committees."²⁵ In addition, the variation in size of plant makes it difficult to compare the experience of large plants who have full-time safety engineers to smaller plants with joint or supervisory committees but no engineer, since size of plant has been found to be an important factor in industrial accident frequency rates.²⁶

The evidence which the Bureau has published for the textile dyeing and finishing industry is not much more conclusive. In some places, it contradicts the evidence in the fertilizer industry. The establishments which had both full-time engineers and Joint Committees had a much higher frequency rate than establishments with other arrangements. They had a frequency rate of 41.5, while the average for all establishments with safety engineers was 16.4. On the other hand, the establishments which had only a Joint Committee made a better record in the group which had no safety engineer than did other establishments. The Joint Committee record here was 21.9. The average for all establishments was 24.7.

In this study, as in the study on the fertilizer industry, the Bureau of Labor Statistics has not shown the amount of activity of the various committees, and there is considerable variation in plant size.²⁷

Taken together, these studies cannot lead us to any definite conclusions about how safety committees have worked out. The only conclusion we can reach is that safety committees do not appear to be cure-alls. But the primary purpose of these two studies was to determine the causes of accidents in the industries studied, and not to evaluate the work of Joint Committees. Let us consider now some of the conclusions reached by a study directed primarily toward evaluating the results with Joint Committees.

Dale Study

Dr. Ernest Dale is an American Management Association economist who has been active in safety programs. He was a member of the Committee on Labor-Management Cooperation for Safety at the President's Conference in 1949. He has studied reports from 39 companies and has published the results which he found.²⁸ His description of the functions, organization, and membership of Joint Committees has been used in the earlier sections of this bulletin. His results include many facts which we will not consider here, but which provide further tests of the effectiveness

of Joint Committees, such as the length of time they have been in operation. We will include here only those results which can be expressed as changes in accident frequency rate or as changes in the safety rank of a company within its industry.

Not all of the committees which Dr. Dale studied were union-management Joint Committees, but all had employee representatives on them. In 23 of these companies, labor-management cooperation was reported to have been a factor in accident frequency rate reduction. In six cases, the results were reported as "much reduction," and in 15, "moderate reduction." Six managements reported that the Joint Committee had been a factor in the *increase* of accident rates.²⁹ (At a later place, we will look at Joint Committee failures to see what caused its collapse.)

Here is a list of some specific establishments which reported the results they have had with Joint Safety Committees to Dale:

1. The Lukens Steel Company had an accident frequency twice that of the industry average in 1937. Then it introduced Joint Committees. In 1946 its average was 20 per cent below the industry average.
2. Three mills in the woolen industry which had Joint Committees had accident frequency rates of .90, 1.46 and 5.34 in 1947. In the same year, 25 mills reporting to the National Safety Council — and therefore more interested in the problems of safety than the average mill but without Joint Committees — had accident frequency rates averaging 10.1. The nationwide woolen industry average was 16.3.
3. The Wolverine Tube Company moved from 25th in its industry to second in its industry in safety in seven years, after introducing Joint Committees.
4. The Globe Forge Company moved from 33rd in the industry to second in four years with Joint Committee help.
5. The American Gas Machine Company moved from 30th to "close to the top" in five years.
6. The Howard Smith Paper Mills moved from 12th place to first place in four years and maintained first place for four years after introducing Joint Committees.³⁰

Union reports which came to Dale were favorable. In the pulp paper industry, the union reported that Joint Committees contributed to the reduced accident frequency of 55 per cent in that industry in the State of Washington in 1948.³¹

A Report on a Successful Committee

In Decatur, Illinois, the A. E. Staley Manufacturing Company and the United Automobile Workers of America, A.F. of L., have worked out a successful plant-wide Joint Safety Committee. This committee has been particularly successful in recent years. The accident frequency rate was between 14 and 19 until the end of World War II, and dropped to 8.8 in 1946 and to 7.5 in 1947. In 1948, the frequency rate dropped still further to 4.8, but rose slightly to 5.0 in 1949 and 6.4 in 1950. In 1949, while the Staley plant's frequency rate was 5.0, the rate for the entire food products industry was 18.9, and for all manufacturing industries, 15.0.³²

Let us see how it is organized and what it does.

Organization

The Staley-UAW Safety Committee is composed of three employee representatives, and one management representative — the Director of Safety.³³ Occasionally, other management specialists also assist the committee in its work. The union representatives are elected directly by the employees in the plant, and there are no formal membership requirements. The tenure of members is for one year, except for the management representative who is a permanent member. The committee operates on a plant-wide basis, and no departmental committees are set up. Committee members hold meetings and tours semi-monthly. Although the safety committee is provided for in the collective bargaining agreement, some form of safety committee had been in existence for 14 years before the local union was organized in 1943.

Participation

The committee makes regular inspection tours of the plant, and frequently accompanies department of labor and insurance company representatives on their inspections. Committee members also receive suggestions from the employees, which they present at regular safety meetings. Primary safety responsibility remains with the foremen of the various departments. Safety recommendations may be made by employees to the foreman as well as to the committee. Committee recommendations can be made subjects of the grievance and bargaining procedures, should dissatisfaction arise because of the disposition of a particular case. Both the company and the union report that the use of the grievance procedure has been very infrequent in connection with the safety problem.

Some Details of Operation

Safety meetings are conducted formally, regularly, with attention to the business at hand. All safety complaints or recommendations made by

employees throughout the plant are posted on bulletin boards, and a note is made of the disposition of the case. When new members join the safety committee they are conducted on safety trips throughout the plant by the old members. The union members of the safety committee make a report at each union meeting. The work of the safety committee is publicized in company publications and in the union newspaper.

Problems

The Staley-UAW Safety Committee must sell its recommendations to management in much the same manner that the engineering staff presents a case for new equipment. Recommendations are balanced against need, cost, time, and production requirements. Management admits it is not possible to carry out all committee recommendations, nor some of them as promptly as some employees may desire. However, the attitude of employees toward the committee's efforts and record is generally quite favorable.

Another Successful Committee

The Forstmann Woolen Company was studied closely in 1948 by Rutgers University to see how their Joint Safety Committee worked, how well it worked, and what conditions were present to make it work.³⁴

The Forstmann-Textile Workers Union of America Joint Committee can be called a successful one. Its 1948 rate of 1.46 compared favorably with the industry average of 16.3. How was it able to achieve this result?

The Background

To begin with, union-management relationships in this plant were generally regarded as good at the time of the study. The company had liberal benefits for employees. There was a union shop. The company and the union were not competing for employee loyalty. There had been some previous joint action on Red Cross and Community Chest drives. From 1935 to 1945 the management had an organized safety program which had been successful from 1935 to 1940, but had lost ground after that, partly because of the unusual strains of the war period.

The Beginning

In 1945, the Textile Workers Union approached the company on the subject of a Joint Union-Management Safety Committee, and the management quickly agreed. But the management insisted that the main responsibility for accident prevention had still to remain with the foremen, who had the responsibility at the time. They also asked that no office-holding union man participate on the committee, and that the safety activities be kept separate from the grievance procedure. The

union agreed to these requests, and a Joint Committee was set up which had supervisors and the manager of the Health and Safety Office on it as management representatives. The union representatives were non-office-holding members, nominated by the union business agent and approved by the union local president. A constitution was drawn up by the committee itself which defined the purposes and organization of the committee, but no provision was written into the contract. Members rotate. Every six months new members were initiated into the committee but the terms of office of the members were arranged so that the committee at all times had experienced members. There were departmental committees as well as a plant committee, unlike the Staley-UAW Committee.

Organization and Functions

Much care was taken in this plant to keep the bargaining and the grievance procedures separate from the safety procedure, according to the Rutgers study. Accident investigation remained a formal management function. Safety engineering was confined strictly to the engineering department. The Joint Committee made recommendations to the management. Management gave these recommendations prompt and serious attention. The committee concentrated on accident prevention, communication, and publicity, but did not attempt to learn formal engineering techniques or investigation procedures. If the committee felt its recommendations were not being given proper attention, and it decided to challenge a management decision, the next step was to process the recommendation through the collective bargaining and grievance procedures. This had not happened at any time when the Rutgers study was made in 1948.

Each person who served on the Forstmann-TWUA Committee was paid for his time. Every member wore a special committeeman's badge. The work of the committee was publicized in the company and union magazines. The participation of all employees was solicited and secured through the usual suggestion and educational devices. There were no contests or "drives." Safety suggestions from all employees were acted upon and answered. The union and the management shared the credit for the success of the program, and both sides recognized the key position of the supervisor in the program.

Stumbling Blocks

Most of the difficulties which the program had came from the fact that the Health and Safety Office manager was on the safety committee, and at the same time was management's representative in Workmen's

Compensation cases. This was one place where the decision to keep the work of the committee and its members as far removed from controversy as possible was not followed through. It had caused some trouble and some mistrust on both sides by 1948, but, the Rutgers report points out, the problem was being worked out between the parties. The Rutgers report says also that some difficulties came up over costs of suggested improvements, as in the Staley-UAW Joint Committee, but it indicates that these difficulties were not serious.

Neither the Forstmann-TWUA Committee nor the Staley-UAW Committee is included in this bulletin as a recipe. They had favorable backgrounds and careful attention went into their formation. They demonstrate that safety committees can succeed with different kinds of organization, and with more and with less degrees of union participation and with more and less authority in the committee. But they are successful Joint Committees by most standards; they have had enthusiastic employee and employer support. Their experience may be useful as a guide to those plants and unions whose positions are comparable to either one.

A Joint Committee Failure

So far we have considered some experience which has been favorable, and some which has been inconclusive about Joint Committees. Now let us look at one of the failures to see what happens when the Joint Safety Committee is not effective.

The experience with one Joint Committee failure was reported in *Personnel* magazine.³⁵ This plant employed 5,000 employees in fairly hazardous work. They practiced cooperation in the plant during the war, but discontinued it after the war. Some of the reasons given for the failure are listed in this article. Management felt that militant shop stewards dominated the safety meetings, which degenerated into heated discussions. The stewards were outspoken in criticizing management handling of safety, and they attempted to push expenditures of large sums of money, which management did not consider practical.

The article also stated that this safety committee had a bad organizational setup. There were no departmental committees, and the foremen were badly trained in accident prevention. The safety department did not have the time nor the staff to follow up anything but major injuries to learn their cause. The safety director was blamed for poor leadership. Department heads were not allowed to install safety devices as they saw fit. In addition, the company feared that the union would go on a "safety strike" as a pretext for causing a disturbance.

Factors in the Success or Failure of Joint Safety Committees

The troubles which Joint Safety Committees sometimes have can be put together as being due to two or three conditions. When safety does not come first in the minds of the committee members themselves, or in the minds of union and management officials concerned with it, both sides may feel that the other is not sincere in putting safety first, and the committee becomes ineffective. Bad organization of the committee may result in too many people with too little to do, or with a few people attempting too much. The selection of members who have no safety interest, or training, to serve as members of the committee may make it operate ineffectively.

In general, managements have attributed Joint Committee failures to the fact that many line employees have not had sufficient training to be effective committee members, and to the fact that the committees sometimes spread themselves too thin, attempting to participate too much in too many places.³⁶

On the other hand, unions have charged that safety committees are sometimes forced into failure because they are not given enough authority or prestige to help, and that they are sometimes short circuited and left inoperative by uncooperative managements.³⁷

In 1946, three joint labor-management safety conferences were held by the management and union in the pulp and paper industry in Washington, Oregon, and California. These conferences considered ways to make Joint Committees in the industry more effective.³⁸

This is an industry which has had considerable favorable experience with Joint Committees. Here are some of the recommendations made in the conferences:

1. Regular Joint Committee meetings should not be cancelled without sufficient reason.
2. Members should attend meetings regularly.
3. Safety should be the only business of the committeemen during safety meetings.
4. Safety meetings should be efficiently and quickly conducted, not prolonged.
5. Committee and employee safety suggestions should be given prompt attention and acknowledgment, even if not used.
6. Prestige of members of the joint committees, both labor and management, should be built up.
7. Members of committees should be qualified for the work.

8. Reports from committeemen to employers and to the unions should be made.
9. Unions should undertake independent training and education programs for their members.
10. Responsibility for maintenance of equipment and provision of safety and sanitation facilities should remain with management.

Advantages and Disadvantages of the Joint Committee

Those people who favor labor-management cooperation on safety in Joint Committee form point out that each individual becomes enlisted in the cause of safety through group work of this sort. They also contend that the individual worker is likely to know more about the hazards of his job than any other person can, and that teamwork can accomplish more than can discipline by management. Benefits not directly related to the accident rate are also mentioned. The union can gain prestige among its members for demonstrating its effective interest in an important problem. Cooperation in the safety area may lead to better relations in other areas.

Those people who dislike this method of attacking the safety problem say that the delegation of responsibility can confuse and mislead the individual employee so that he feels that he is no longer responsible for safety. They also argue that since it is management's legal responsibility under Workmen's Compensation and Employer Liability laws to provide for safety, the employer must be unhampered by restrictions. They feel that committee action costs time and money and is ineffective if the employees do not have the technical knowledge to be valuable. It is also argued against Joint Committees that unions will not support discipline against their members and may have little ability to sell safety to them.³⁹

SUMMARY

Let us summarize the experience and opinions on the Joint Union-Management Committee. It appears that while both management and unions have no arguments over the importance of safety, this method is not without controversy. Some managements object to it as being inefficient and an invasion of their responsibility. Some unions are not interested in the safety program, or feel that management is not willing to give Joint Committees full cooperation. When both parties agree to the method, fault is found by both union and management with the way in which the other side handles some of the problems which arise.

Where Joint Committees have been installed, and where representa-

tives from both groups have made sincere attempts to meet the other on the problems which arise, the results seem to have been good. Dr. Dale's conclusion on this study of industry records is, "It seems justifiable to draw the conclusion that the introduction of cooperation has improved companies' records, and their ranks in their industries."

NOTES

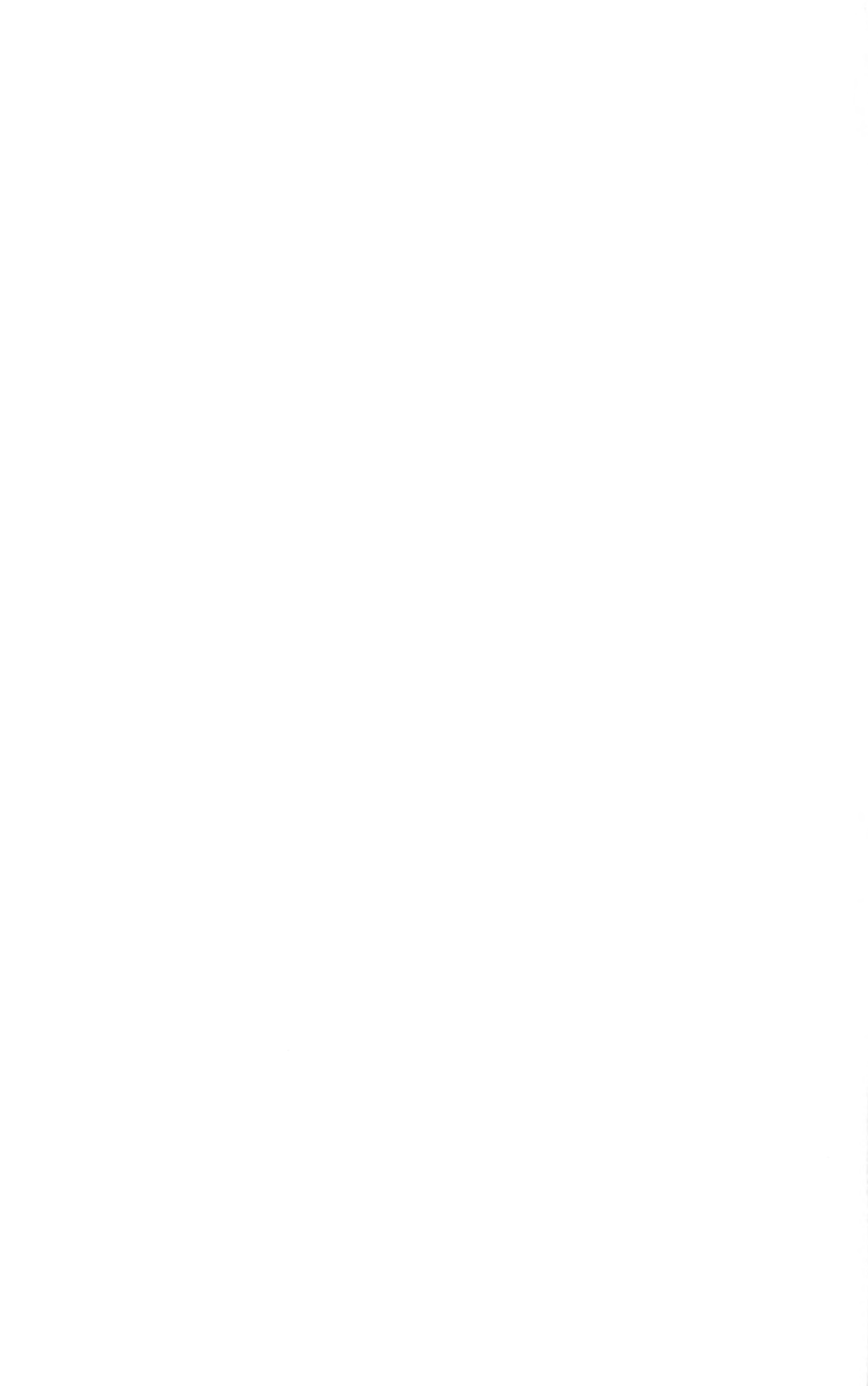
1. *Annual Report on Industrial Accidents in Illinois, 1949* (Illinois Department of Labor, Division of Statistics and Research), pp. vi, vii, 7, and 54-63. The figures quoted in the text are subject to a reporting lag discussed on p. 8 of the *Annual Report*.
2. Address by Maurice J. Tobin, "The Nation's Next Steps in Safety," *Proceeding of the President's Conference on Industrial Safety, 1949* (U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Standards, Bulletin No. 122), p. 7. To attack the problem of reducing job accidents, the President's Conference was convened in 1949 and again in 1950. In attendance were legislators, statisticians, safety engineers, administrators, educators, and representatives of unions, management, and the public.
The Illinois Governor's Conference was one of many held in the states in conjunction with the President's Conference and was similarly attended.
3. *Illinois Labor Bulletin* (Illinois Department of Labor), September-October, 1949, Cover.
4. Tobin address.
5. *Reports of the Committee on Accident Records, Analysis and Use*, President's Conference, 1949-50 (Bureau of Labor Standards, Bulletin No. 131), p. 11.
6. For different bases of estimates, see Harry A. Millis and Royal E. Montgomery, *Labor's Risks and Social Insurance*, p. 188.
7. Herbert W. Heinrich, *Industrial Accident Prevention*, p. 17.
8. *Reports of Committee on Engineering*, President's Conference, 1949-50 (Bureau of Labor Standards, Bulletin No. 133), p. 10.
9. *Illinois Labor Bulletin*, September-October, 1949, Cover.
10. Millis and Montgomery, p. 222.
11. *Reports of Committee on Engineering*, p. 10.
12. Federal agencies which publish materials on safety also include: The Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor, The Department of Commerce, and The Navy Yard Division. Insurance companies and chambers of commerce also often issue educational materials.
13. For a more complete discussion of resources and programs in this field, see *Reports of the Committee on Education*, President's Conference, 1949-50 (Bureau of Labor Standards, Bulletin No. 132).
14. The report of the committee can be found in *Reports of the Committee on Labor-Management Cooperation for Safety*, President's Conference, 1949-50 (Bureau of Labor Standards, Bulletin No. 136), pp. 6-7.
15. *Report of the Committee on Labor-Management Cooperation for Safety*, Illinois Governor's Conference, May, 1950.
16. *Collective Bargaining Provisions: Safety, Health, and Sanitation* (U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bulletin Nos. 908-14).
17. *Joint Safety Committees at Work* (Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bulletin No. 61), pp. 2-3.
18. Ernest Dale, "Labour-Management Cooperation in Accident Prevention in the United States," *Industrial Safety Survey*, XXV, No. 2, p. 43.
19. Dale, p. 41.
20. Dale, p. 41.
21. *Joint Safety Committees at Work*, p. 4.
22. Dale, p. 42.
23. *Joint Safety Committees at Work*, p. 4.

24. *Injuries and Accident Causes in Fertilizer Manufacturing* (Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bulletin No. 949), p. 32.
25. *Injuries and Accident Causes in Fertilizer Manufacturing*, p. 30.
26. For discussion of relation of plant size to accidents, see *Reports of the Committee on Programs and Services*, President's Conference, 1949-50 (Bureau of Labor Standards, Bulletin No. 137), pp. 22-26.
27. *Injuries and Accident Causes in Textile Dyeing and Finishing* (Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bulletin No. 962), p. 38.
28. Dale. (See note 18.)
29. Dale, p. 43. He studied only 29 companies' frequency rate over a period of years.
30. Dale, p. 44.
31. Dale, p. 44.
32. *Monthly Labor Review* (Bureau of Labor Statistics), October, 1950, p. 483.
33. From personal interviews by the author during 1950.
34. *Joint Safety Program of Forstmann Woolen Company and Local 656, Textile Workers Union of America, CIO* (Rutgers University, Institute of Management and Labor Relations).
35. J. F. Donerger, "Failures of the Safety Program," *Personnel*, November, 1945.
36. Dale, p. 48.
37. Solomon Barkin, "A Labor View of the Safety Problem." Quoted by Dale, p. 48.
38. *Three Joint Labor-Management Safety Conferences; Pulp and Paper Industry, 1946*. (Bureau of Labor Standards Reprint, April, 1948.)
39. Dale, pp. 48-49.

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