

Safety, the Lodestar to Industrial Happiness and Profits

PERHAPS YOU, just as I, have been intrigued by the terrified faces and mysterious voice saying, "What are these people afraid of—it is the unexpected," which precedes one of the popular television shows. And the more you think about it, the more you realize that when we use the words "safety" and "security," we are in large measure referring to keeping oneself and others safe from the UNEXPECTED or to maintaining freedom from anxiety and doubt about the UNKNOWN. To prove this, simply ask yourself the question, "do I feel secure when driving my automobile down the street?" or the question "am I afraid to hang a picture for my wife?" Ordinarily one is quick to answer "yes" to the first question and "no" to the second question; and I am told that one hen-pecked husband answered the second question not only by saying "no" but by adding "I am afraid not to."

Most people hang so many pictures and do other chores around the home so often without getting hurt that sight is lost of the fact that the home is the scene of a very high percentage of accidents that range from falling off a shakily erected ladder to being electrocuted by a wiring connection in the bathroom that was not known to be faulty. We feel secure when driving our automobile down the streets primarily because we are familiar with the operation, and do it every day, and apparently have control of the situation. But are we really secure? How about the UNKNOWN or the UNEXPECTED? All it takes to spoil one's safety record and to eliminate his feeling of security is to have another car unexpectedly come "barreling" around a corner and crash into his car. This brings to mind a 10- x 30-foot billboard sign I saw years ago in Orange, Tex., at a sharp bend of the Old Spanish Trail highway; the billboard had printed on it in large letters the admonition "Slow Down! You May Meet a Fool!" A newspaper, in editorializing on this subject, pointed out that in many cases the sign would be more applicable if it read "Slow Down! You May Meet Another Fool!"

Speaking of the unexpected as related to accidents, imagine my surprise at hearing about a fire caused by dust and rain. The newspaper account credited to a combination of drouth and rain the setting fire to several utility poles with a disrupting of electric power service to thousands of homes as a concomitant result. It happened that dust collected on the poles and insulators during an extended drouth; then, when it finally rained, the dust absorbed the moisture and formed a contact which permitted electricity to flow to the ground, thereby setting fire to the poles and breaking the circuits. Although the basic causes in this connection were not unknown, it is an interesting illustration of a rare and unexpected accident. Since the physics, chemistry, and mechanics of this accident were known, it would have been possible to have taken precautions that would have prevented the accident. One precaution might have been brushing the dust off the insulators by hand, an obviously impractical procedure when one considers the remote chance of the accident happening.

THUS, without belaboring the matter further, one sees that safety and security are related to the unexpected, the unknown, and the practical as well as to attitudes of carelessness and indifference that sometimes exist. And one cannot deny that safety—safety to both personnel and property—is the lodestar to industrial happiness and profits when consideration is given to the suffering and grief, as well as to the monetary losses resulting from disrupted production and damage claims, that often follow accidents within a plant. But safety of itself does not lead to security and is not an open-sesame to industrial happiness and profits; for anything worthwhile to be accomplished, it is necessary not only to "think safety" but also to "do something" about it. And happily safety, unlike the weather, is a matter about which we can do something.

WITH the foregoing in mind President T. H. Hopper and the Governing Board, on the occasion of the recent meeting in Houston, decided to establish a permanent Technical Safety Committee by way of rounding out the engineering or operating service that the American Oil Chemists' Society is rendering to the oil and fat industry specifically and to the general public as a whole.

Plant designs that are safe and plant operating procedures that are safe, from both a personnel and property standpoint, are ideals to which everyone can heartily subscribe. The members of the Technical Safety Committee from year to year will, I am sure, contribute freely of their time and energy for the good of the cause; in all probability it will be a contribution of the few for the general good of the entire industry and for many plants in particular, for that matter. However, for the Committee to do the most good, it will be necessary for the management of the various plants within the oil and fat industry to "lend a hand," as we used to say in the Navy.

One way that management can help is to encourage at least some of their engineers, superintendents, and operating personnel to become members of the American Oil Chemists' Society and to take an active part in the Society's meetings and proceedings. And no matter how much money a company may spend in this connection, sight should not be lost of the fact that the work of its men, combined with similar work of numerous men from other companies, could pay it back "seven-fold" if their work resulted in a safety practice that prevented one serious accident in their plant. So with the personal happiness, public good-will, and dollars of profits that are at stake, it behooves plant management to support the work of the Society's new Technical Safety Committee to the end that time and energy expended

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A. O. C. S. Commentary

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by its members can render the most good to the firms and other groups making up the great oil and fat industry.

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Technical Safety Group Meets

A MEETING of 34 persons interested in plant technical safety matters was held April 24, 1956, at the Shamrock-Hilton hotel, Houston, Tex., during the spring meeting of the American Oil Chemists' Society. A. E. MacGee, chairman, explained that the meeting was an outgrowth of informal meetings and discussions held in the past and suggested that those present recommend to the president and the Governing Board that a permanent Technical Safety Committee be appointed. This suggestion was unanimously approved.

Dr. MacGee stressed the fact that chemists and engineers have a wealth of information on both theoretical and practical safety matters which could be used by management, fire and safety officials, and insurance representatives. It was felt that a safety committee, being primarily of a technical and advisory nature, would not interfere with or supplant the safety divisions or insurance divisions of any of the firms whose representatives are members of the Society. Discussion revealed that such a committee could give additional emphasis in the Society to the engineering, operational, and managerial phases of the industry.

Miles E. Woodworth, secretary and liquid fuels engineer of the National Fire Protection Association, Boston, Mass., spoke on standards for fire protection developed by technical committees of his association. A sectional committee of the Association's flammable liquids committee has been formed to develop standards on solvent extraction, and a tentative set of standards is well under way. He invited the American Oil

Chemists' Society to assign a member to work on this sectional committee of his association.

One of the purposes of the meeting was a round-table discussion on "Schedule for Measuring and Rating the Hazards of Fire and Inherent Explosion, Windstorm, Extended Coverage, Explosion, Vandalism and Malicious Mischief, Riot and Civil Commotion, and Business Interruption of Continuous Process Solvent-Extraction Plants Using Flammable Liquids Having a Closed Cup Flash Point Below 110 degrees F." Excerpts from 14 letters on this subject, written by persons unable to attend the meeting, were read by Dr. MacGee. Those who spoke at the meeting included Horace R. Belew, manager of the Insurance Department of Western Cottonoil Company, Abilene, Tex., and George A. Quandee, of the Insurance Department of Swift and Company, Chicago, Ill. Various others participated in the question-and-answer portion of the program.

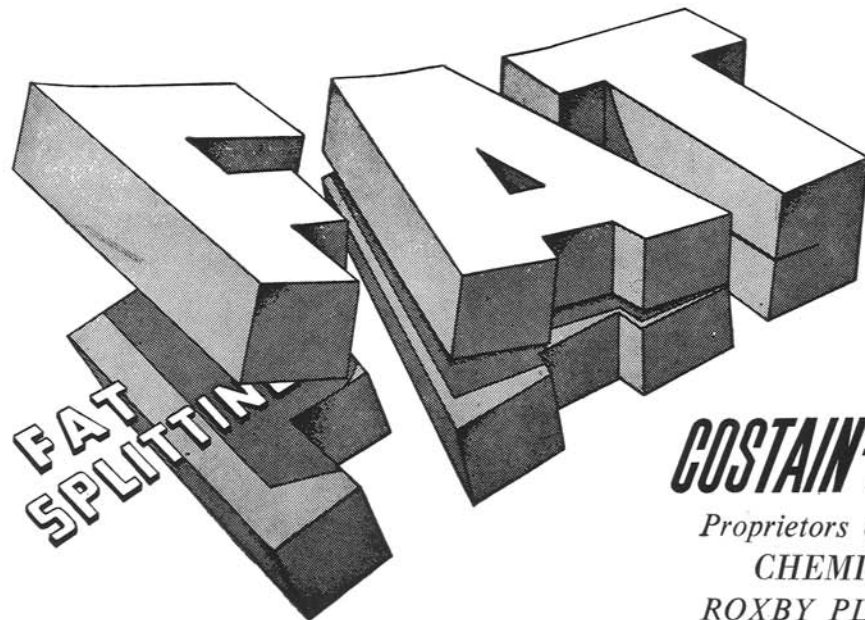
Announce Meat Packing Award

The Dodge and Olcott Inc. annual award of \$1,000 for outstanding achievement in the meat packing industry, to be presented during the 1956 meeting of the American Meat Institute, is now open to any contribution to the growth and general welfare of the meat-packing industry that is of recent origin but in use long enough to have proven its advantageous qualities in some phase of the industry. Nominations are open until August 1, 1956, and should be sent to Dodge and Olcott Inc., 180 Varick street, New York 14, N. Y.

Announce Annual Glycerine Awards

The Glycerine Producers' Association has announced that its fifth annual glycerine research awards, granted for independent research leading to new and improved applications of glycerine or glycerine derivatives to products or processes, are now open and that nomination blanks are available. The first award is \$1,000, and second and third awards are \$300 and \$200, respectively. Copies of a bulletin giving complete details may be obtained from the Glycerine Producers' Association, 295 Madison avenue, New York, N. Y.

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