HEALTH AND SAFETY PROGRAM OF JOHNS-MANVILLE

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While the Industrial Revolution of the early 19th Century developed the methods for greatly augmenting production, it did so at a cost of human values too great to sustain such a one sided materialistic pursuit. During the latter half of the 19th and early 20th century humanitarian reforms were the natural outcome of the over-emphasis on materialism and its handmaiden of human degradation. The impetus of these reforms together with the rapidly changing social conscience along many other lines led to a great improvement in conditions of work, commerce and welfare. During this century some setbacks and delays occured as a result of the need to sacrifice gains in working conditions under the over-riding demands for production during the two major World Wars. One now hears affirmations of humanitarianism not audible 50 years ago or even conceivable 100 years ago.

There are an ever increasing number of persons responsible for industrial policy, both management and labor, who now say, and mean it, that production under the drive of the profit motive must take full recognition of the requirement that this be accomplished without adverse effects upon the health and safety of those who produce or use the product or those residing in the communities where production or use occurs. This goal has repeatedly been voiced and consistently pursued by those responsible for Johns-Manville policy. Never-the-less, I believe most would agree the goal has not yet been reached and even when it is, a persistent effort will be required to maintain it. Under the ever changing conditions of production and profit making, this goal is constantly in jeopardy. Events of the past year or so strongly

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indicate a need for Johns-Manville to re-appraise its program with respect to the methods it is using to reach this goal.

The operational approaches to this goal are not apt to remain static. Never-the-less there are some, more fixed, policies that can be indicated as necessary if J-M is to come as close to the goal as is humanly possible. The first of these is that the commitment to this goal must be made from the very apex of the organization and in such a way that the commitment is convincing to the operating level both management and labor. Second, over-all development and supervision of the modalities to be used in reaching this goal should be in the hands of one person who has this responsibility as his primary or sole assignment. Third, this person must be given tools in the way of personel and influence adequate for him to be able to discharge his responsibility. Fourth, there should be a setting in which competition between demand for controls can be balanced against need for controls. This is a subtle but most important point. The question of over or under-doing the protective efforts is frequently raised. Resolution of such questions should be on an adversary basis with the opportunity for resolution at the highest level in the corporation. Fifth, there must be a mechanism for recognizing potential safety and health hazards before they become a commited part of the corporate activity. Sixth, there must be a mechanism for rapid evaluation of the effectiveness of the total program.

I have the impression that Johns-Manville, in spite of its early commitment to an optimum safety and health program, came out of

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the Second World War, and its associated period of laxness in these matters, without an adequate program and with other problems that appeared to be of a more pressing nature. Pace was not kept with what was known and with what others in fact were doing. Some of these shortcomings could, if need be, be documented.

The following changes and additions in organization might be considered as favoring the development of a program to improve J-M's position with respect to health and safety.

(1) The President and ranking officers should find a means of voicing their commitment to profitable production but not at the expense of health and safety. Doubtless, all concerned beleive in this premise. However, do they and their associates at this level consistantly act on this premise? For example, when a person is being evaluated for promotion is consideration given to the effectiveness with which he has prevented injuries or adverse health affects. I would note here that I doubt if any person deliberately violates good health and safety procedure while I am reasonably certain that some do so out of ignorance.

(2) The President and perhaps the Board of Directors should overtly take the ultimate responsibility for the health and safety commitment by establishing a way of frequently reviewing the progress and status of the broad aspects of J-M's health and safety record.

To accomplish the commitment of "profitable production without

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impairment of health and safety," the now fragmented parts of the program needed to bring this about should be brought together under one person possessing the required expertise at a rank which will guarantee access directly to the President and indicative of the commitment of the corporation to the program. The rank should be such as to give the director of the program sufficient status to press his opinions which may at times be adversary in nature. Under the directors supervision and responsibility should be the following disciplines.

(1) Industrial hygiene and toxicology: This discipline together with safety is the heart of any program designed to prevent impairment of health of the workers. If properly operated it will provide the information necessary to prevent adverse health effects before they occur. The information obtained must, of course, be acted upon in time. It should be noted that "toxicology" is combined with industrial hygiene. These two disciplines compliment one another and are less useful alone. J-M has not had the services of a professional toxicologist to date. To utilize medical or hygiene personel for this is helpful but not entirely satisfactory.

(2) Safety: This is the other major contributor to the health maintenance program, especially in regard to prevention of injury. This discipline depends heavily on continuous education as well as proper equipment, warnings and supervision.

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(3) Medical Program: This discipline has changed over the years from one solely of handling injuries and illness incurred on the production premises to one of monitoring and prevention of health impairment. The medical program also has generally served as the main source of advice regarding toxicology and medical aspects of Workman's Compenstion. In the past there has been a tendency to put a physician trained in general surgery or medicine in charge of such a program with little attention being paid to the fact that the heart of the program is prevention: In recent years a cadre of physicians particularly trained in preventive medicine and health maintenance has emerged. At present, most large corporations have a physician trained in this manner in charge of the overall health and safety program.

(4) Program to involve management and labor in a continuous maximum effort to carry out optimum work practices promoting health and safety: No program attempting to reach the highest performance with respect to health and safety preservation can succeed on the basis of management effort alone. The worker must become an integral part of this program with regard to recommendations, knowledge of the status of the program and methods of acheiving compliance. This is a continuous educational and study program in which the health and safety program provides a

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a continuous input. If adequate modalities for accomplishing this sort of merger between management and labor do not now exist they must be found.

(5) Supervision of compliance with Government regulations concerning the Environment, Safety and Medical programs: This is becoming a sufficiently complicated matter to require it become a primary responsibility of one or more persons. Much can be accomplished in promoting the J-M health and safety program through the various Government regulations. On the other hand they should not be slavishly followed with the thought that they guarantee a successful health and safety program. At times the performance must be better than is asked for by Government regulation. Moreover, Government regulations commonly develope after, and not before, adverse health or safety conditions occur. It is short sighted to rest on the attitude that a corporations program complies with government regulations and nothing more need be done.

(6) Workman's Compensation: As originally conceived years ago Workman's Compensation was aimed at providing compensation for those persons suffering from impairments or injuries arising out of their employment. Under this stimulus a great deal of advance was made in the betterment of working conditions and prevention of health impairment and injury. There was a time when the cost of Workman's Compensation

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was a reasonably accurate measure of the effectiveness of the health and safety program. At present however, Workman's Compensation appears to be more of a social instrument in general welfare and labor relations. Strong medical input seems to be of less use and the total cost of Workman's Compensation a less accurate measure of effectiveness of health maintenance. There has developed a regretable attitude of looking upon Workman's Compenstion as a cost of doing business rather than a reflection of avoidable injury and impairment. It is difficult at present to know where to place the management of this function. There would be merit to placing this program in the purview of the director of the Health and Safety Program. An effort to bring it under more rigorous surveillance might return it to its original status and tend to lessen the trend it now has of serving as a social instrument.

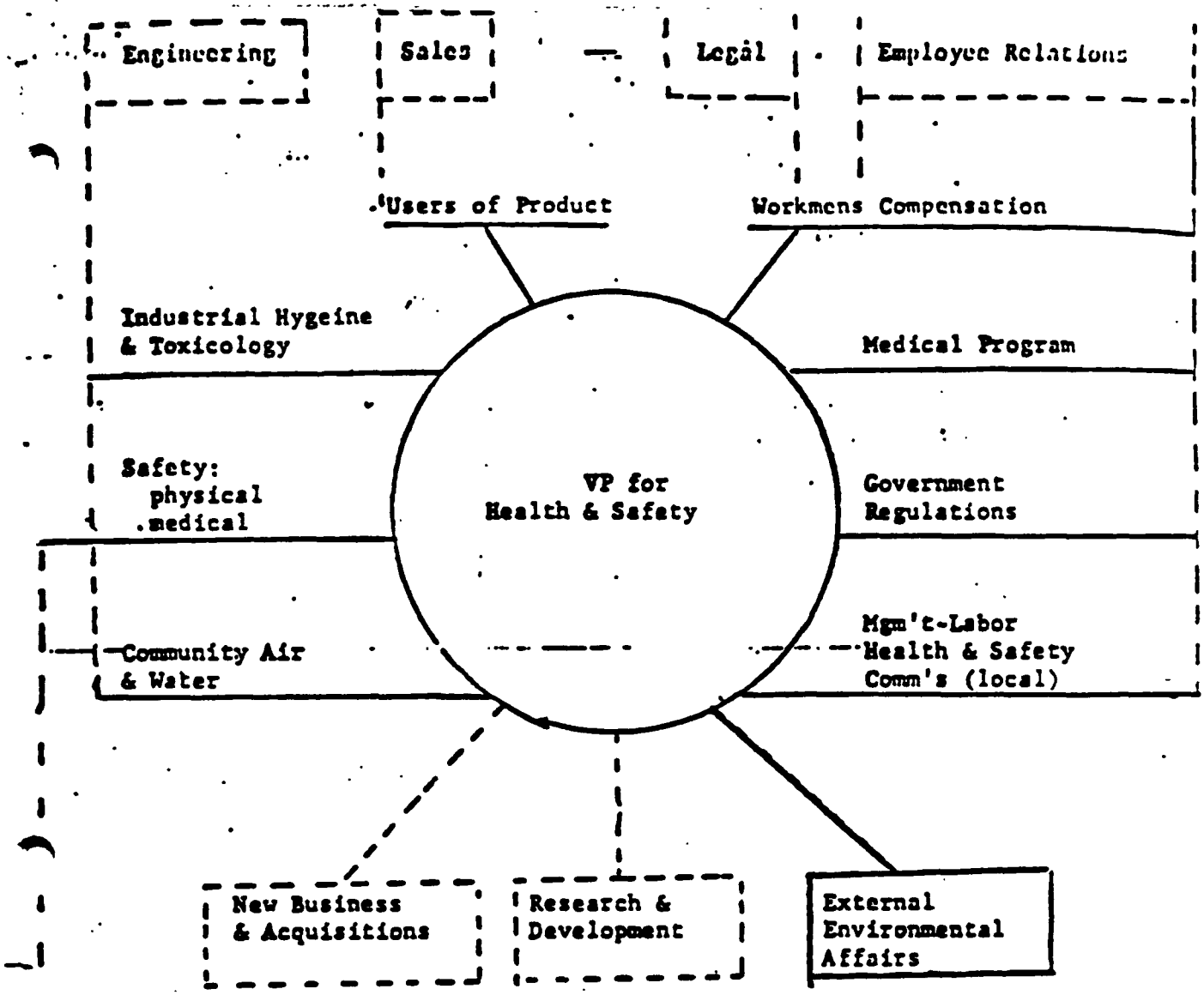
Not included in this overall discussion is the problem of protecting the user of the products made by J-M and the community in which production procedures are carried out. It would be entirely appropriate for these responsibilities to be added to the overall health and safety program. On the other hand, there might be merit to developing these two features in a separate manner since different populations and regulating agencies are involved. On balance, I believe they should be incorporated into one group responsibility so that common technical expertise and knowledge could be made use of.

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The various disciplines suggested for recruitment into a common program are so highly inter-related that each would suffer if left isolated. Moreover, the program as a whole would fall short of what it might achieve if they are not combined and thus bring to bear their various influences on the common problem.

The accompanying chart shows the makeup of the proposed grouping and some areas of essential co-ordination with other Divisions of the Corporation.

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