STENOGRAPHERS' MINUTES

BEFORE THE

UNITED STATES MARITIME COMMISSION

_____ NO. _____

MEETING IN REGARD TO MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR INDUSTRIAL HEALTH AND SAFETY IN SHIPYARDS.

VS.

AT: Chicago, Ill.

DATE: December 7, 8, 1942.

ETHEL E. FISHER AND ASSOCIATES, INC.
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UNITED STATES MARITIME COMMISSION
AND
UNITED STATES NAVY

MEETING IN REGARD TO MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR INDUSTRIAL HEALTH AND SAFETY IN SHIPYARDS.

The first session of the Shipbuilding Health and Safety Section of the United States Navy and United States Maritime Commission, held in the Century Room, Hotel LaSalle, Chicago, Illinois, on Monday, December 7, 1942, convened at 10 o'clock a.m., Mr. Daniel S. Ring, Chief, Shipyards Labor Relations, United States Maritime Commission, presiding.

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CHAIRMAN RING: Now as we start off, I guess we better know who we are. My name is Ring. I am with the Maritime Commission, in charge of the shipyard labor relations, and a part of the function of the shipyard labor relations is that of safety and health programs for contractors of the Maritime Commission in the various yards all over the country.

This conference is being called jointly by the Maritime Commission and the Navy in the interest of promoting standardized programs to develop at least minimum requirements for the two, safety and health, for the million people who will be in the shipyards after the first of the year.

The invitations went forth to all of the contractors in shipyards on the Atlantic, Pacific, Great Lakes, and Gulf Coasts, and a response has been received which indicates that there will be a far larger attendance here as the day goes on than now. We received a number of wires this morning indicating that trains are late, planes have been delayed, and that those who are intending to attend the conference will be delayed.

We are afraid to hold things up any longer on account of those with transportation delays, and felt if we were going to get anywhere we might as well start now and let the latecomers pick up as they come in.

This conference was set on foot after it was realized that although during the last year tremendous strides had

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been made with production in the fast and growing expansion of all of the plants, too little attention had been paid to the matters involving the health and safety of the employees. We have had towns, and sizable towns, that have grown to double their capacity, and to treble their capacity, during the last year, and we have had yards that have mushroomed out to such a degree that in the rush and bustle of getting production going and putting the work in on the million tons of shipping we expect to get in this year, that possible the features of protecting the health of the men who are working in the yards and their safety have not been emphasized on a standardized basis and on a uniform basis as they should have been.

Accordingly, the Maritime Commission and the Navy decided that they would have a survey made in which facts would be gathered whereby we could present to the industry and those who are principally interested standards for the observation of rules governing the health of men working in the yards and their safety. As a result of that, the services of Mr. Drinker, who is the head of the Public Health, and a group of men from the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, of the Navy, were detailed to take a tour in typical yards all over the country to find out what the facts were. We felt that before planning on any rules we had better get down to bed rock and know exactly what conditions exist.

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They made this tour and made specific records and reports on each yard, transmitting the same to the yard for their guidance. In addition to that, they were at all times collecting data which would be in the nature of a common denominator as far as everyone was concerned, so that at the conclusion of the tour Mr. Drinker and his associates felt that we would have enough facts at hand to be able to present to the industry, through the Maritime Commission and Navy, minimum standards as to the requirements for the protection of the health of the men in the yards.

During this morning, Mr. Drinker will present to you those minimum standards for health. At the same time Mr. John Roche of the National Safety Council also made a tour of the principal shipyards in the country from the standpoint of safety, and he has developed a number of facts which have led him to believe that we can now have a sufficient factual basis to prescribe minimum standards so far as the safety factors in the yards are concerned.

In addition to that, Mr. Jack Wolf, who is in charge of training for the Maritime Commission, has also made a number of tours and he has some very decided ideas with respect to the inculcation of the health hazards and the safety perils in the minds of men who are just entering the industry. He feels, and we all feel, that this can be very well made a part of the training program, so that as the man walks in new

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and green, into the industry, one of the very first things that he gets along with the training as far as the skill of the craft that he is going to work in is concerned, is a knowledge of what he must do, and what he must observe to protect his own health and to protect his own safety.

If you get that to the men when they are just coming in the yard, why then you have started right at the foundation to build up a respect for the health and safety program.

You will notice, among other things hanging around here, a lot of empty suits which are designed for the use of women coming into industry. We all know from recent reports that there is going to be a tremendous influx of women in the industry, specialized attention therefore is being given along those lines independent from the line that this conference will proceed upon. However, we have felt in view of the fact the manufacturers have moved toward the production of clothes which will be safe for women to wear in the industry, you might like to see some. Accordingly, arrangements are being made, and our scouts are now out to obtain some human figures of attractive form that can make these empty clothes that are hanging on the rack a little more delectable so far as the eyes are concerned, and it is hoped that tomorrow we will be able to present to you a specific demonstration with some of the more attractive types of people in Chicago to be wearing them so that you can see for yourselves exactly how the fea-

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tures of the clothing will be presented.

I was at first a little afraid of such a program, because it struck me that maybe the wearer of the clothes and their appearance might detract from the concentration on the clothes themselves if we did such a thing. However, I was overruled, and Mr. Roche especially here said, "You do not expect these fellows who are pretty hard boiled and who have come from all sections of the country, to become very enthusiastic and pay very much attention to a lot of empty clothes? You have to put those clothes over some very attractive forms before they will really give their attention to it," and accordingly arrangements are being made, as I have said, to have some sort of a safety clothes model show tomorrow afternoon. We will hear more about that later.

Now, one of the very serious things that we are confronted with is the fumes from welding machines, and there will be a demonstration on that for each group, one for those of you who are specifically dedicated to the health side of it, and one for those who are specifically from the safety department this afternoon. The announcements on that will be made a little later by Mr. Drinker.

We have asked the yards and the men who are really shouldering this responsibility in the various yards on health and safety to give this matter serious consideration, and we do that in order that we will get those who are directly

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concerned with the problems that are involved.

I want to welcome all of you here, and I want to tell you that I think that this is the first time that the ship building industry on the scope as broad as this has moved directly into cooperation and focused itself and its attention on two very specific problems that they have.

You want to remember that it was on this day just a year ago that the blow came at Pearl Harbor. The thing that left us stunned for a little while; the thing that no one ever expected would occur, and although we have gone along during the last year, striving here and striving there, most of us were doing it with our eyes right on the job before us, in order to develop things, and it is only when you stand today, a year from that day, and look back over the year that has just passed, and realize what a tremendous job that the shipyards of the nation have accomplished.

Our boys, to the extent of four millions, and I imagine that there are very few of us here who has not one who is close to us, are out in the uniform ready to protect the things that we hold so dear in this country.

We are building the ships to take the ammunition and the supplies to the manpower of the nation, and it has been restricted and reduced in such a way that we must make sure that the farthest possible use must be made of every one of us who are able to work on the home front.

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With that in view, we are dedicating this conference to the purpose of promoting the greatest individual efficiency in shipyards throughout the country. Our whole objective is based upon production, because everything else is subsidiary to that, but we must remember that production in this struggle is something of a long-range nature.

This is not going to be a short struggle that we are in, as everyone realizes what odds we are up against, and if we are going to be in a long drawn out struggle we have got to have men who are physically fit and we have got to keep them physically fit, and we have got to keep them from the perils that will impair their productivity.

I again want to say that you are welcome here. I hope that we will have an opportunity to meet each other personally, and discuss individual problems as we go along, but time with us, especially in these days, is very short. We hope to wind this conference up tomorrow evening, and as for the general program at the present time, I think I will just sketch that now.

First,you will hear from Mr. Drinker with respect to the minimum standards so far as health is concerned.

Next, you will hear from Mr. John Roche with respect to minimum standards so far as safety is concerned, and next you will hear from Mr. Jack Wolf with respect to the training program.

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Then, we would welcome a word from the representatives of the Navy, Commander Carlson, and Mr. Desjardines, and then I think the time will be ripe to separate for the afternoon session into two groups, where you yourself can study what is being presented to you and find out if in the papers that have been distributed to you anything is whacky, or anything is off the beam, and let us all sit down together and work out for ourselves from the wealth of experience and knowledge that we have here along these specialized lines standards that will be ones of integrity, that will be practical ones, that will be ones which will result in a promotion and accumulation of production, and when we have done that, all collectively, we ought to come together here tomorrow morning on a final agreement on the consensus of this conference with respect to those standards.

Once that is done, it is intended that the Maritime Commission and the Navy Department promulgate those to all of the yards, and ask that in the interest of efficient production, those standards be adhered to. We will have an organization jointly dedicated to the yards with Navy contracts and Maritime Commission contracts which will be applicable to all companies, both from the health and from the safety standpoint.

We want you to understand that we do not intend to do this job ourselves. That is basically your job. However, we

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do hope that we can act in the role of coordinators and advisers. We want to be there to help you do that job.

Now, in the very first place, we want it understood that the standards will be the product of your doing, your own conference right here. If all those who come who have been invited, we will have representatives here from the Safety Department, from the Medical Department, from management, from labor, and in that way we will have a true cross picture of those who have the principal duty of really building these ships for us.

Now, tomorrow morning then it is hoped that we will be in a position to come to some agreement on what the standards should be. Tomorrow afternoon we hope that we will be able to display to you the most advanced styles so far as clothes for women are concerned, and as soon as definite arrangements are made on that, we will let you know.

From now on, I think that we might as well get down to work. If any of you have not got copies of Mr. Drinker's or Mr. Roche's data, they will available for you at the registration desk outside. I also want to say that everyone here will register so that we will have a record of the attendance.

Again, I want to thank you very much indeed for your attendance here and I want to wish you all success in the speedy and efficient formulation of these formulas for the protection of the health and safety of workers in our ship-

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yards, because, after all, it is going to be your job. Thank you all very much, indeed. (Applause.)

Now, I want to present to you Mr. Drinker, who will talk to you on the minimum standards for industrial health in shipyards.

MR. PHILIP DRINKER: Have you gentlemen all copies of this minimum standards for the control of health in contract shipyards of Maritime Commission and Navy?

Now, it will be impossible for this to be the success we hope for the conference unless you in such brief time as we have, and we are going to designedly have plenty, unless you mill around and get to know each other and inter-visit. You come fromall corners of the country, and many of you have not met each other, and we wish you would throw formality to the winds and just inter-visit and have some unofficial talks about anything at all to do with the things that bring us here.

Will you turn first to Section A, page 1, and I do not intend to read all of this in detail, but I do hope that those who are especially concerned with the medical end of this, will take time to go over it roughly now, and then in detail this afternoon and this evening.

On the first few paragraphs there probably is nothing especially controversial, but as we go down the page there will be, notably under physical facilities, item 2, under the

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Roman numerals, we suggest that substations for first aid be within a distance of about 400 yards for anybody, so that a man would, in an emergency job, not have to be taken further than that, or if he could walk, he would not have to be requested to go farther than that himself.

We do not wish to imply in this that we intend to be arbitrary and go out and measure the distance. We certainly do not expect to do that.

The doctors and nurses and ambulance facilities are more or less according to the accepted practices, and I think in many yards they are already established. If the yard beats these suggestions that naturally is no cause for unfavorable comment. We favor it very warmly.

On page 2-A, one of the first faults that we found with the maritime yards, - and it is not true of all of them, - but of some of them, and that was the records and forms that came to the Maritime Commission. We thought that those records and forms were very poor, and they are being changed, and that will be discussed in some detail in Mr. Roche's section.

The suggested forms that we would like to see filled in now, and which in many cases have not been filled in, are any such form as this discussed in 2-A. Now, we know in an emergency we do not want any form filled out. When a man is badly hurt, you do not want him to fill out any form in order

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to bring him to a doctor, naturally.

Item 1 is a form authorizing the workman to report to the medical department for examination or treatment issued by a foreman or leading man or other supervisor. This shall show time of issue, arrivalat dispensary, discharge from dispensary and return to work.

In many cases, now there are no records in the yards of men who go to dispensaries for minor ailments. They cause loss of time, and in most cases we have no way of showing it, and no way of comparing with another yard for loss of time on any such basis. That is not true in every place, but it is true in a great many of them.

The filing of records with the medical department and the safety department in many cases is not good at all, and it would be a decided advantage of all to see that that is good.

We would like to have the safety and medical departments to have the same records of any accident, injuries or illness, and that they have that information given to them promptly.

Under examinations we urge very strongly what might be called a pre-placement examination for employees. This does not mean an examination in advance of hiring necessarily, but when a man is hired he should be examined to see that he is put in the job for which he is physically suited, and not one

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for which he is physically unsuited, which may do him harm or harm to those with whom he works. We feel that periodic check examinations should be given to the men in all jobs where the men are doing something which is hazardous or which is a risky job, either to the men themselves or to others. I have reference to crane operators, locomotive and hoisting and portable engineers. It certainly should have periodic physical check-ups, and now in many yards they do not have that. We urge in the strongest possible terms that there be periodic check examinations to men in jobs in which there is a definite health risk such as sand blasting, paint spraying, and certain types of radium and x-ray work.

Item 3 is that special examinations, such x-ray, serologic and urinalyses shall be given in the individual case as indicated, and in accordance with local needs. Now, special examinations such as x-ray, serologic, and urinalyses would be asked by a doctor in any normal establishment, and we believe it should be here, but we do not think there is any need for us to give any cut and dried scheme that you should follow. They will vary with the place, and we think it would be a hindrance rather than a help for us to detail the procedure to be followed everywhere.

On page 3-A, air raid precautions, the amount of work that was done on that, and the preparations throughout the country was quite different. In some places it was done in-

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completely, and in other places it was done rather haphazardly. It was more or less a matter of chance.

Now, we do not believe that our organization is in any position to say what precautions ought to be taken, but we do feel very strongly that the least the yard can do is to keep up to date and be sure they are acting in accordance with the wishes of the local army and navy officials. If that is done, there is no reason that we should criticize it, but by and large most of the yards we saw the emergency medical supplies, such as you would need in the event of an air raid, etc., were generally speaking all in one place. Now, that is not always true, but generally it is. So if there was a direct hit, presumably most of them would be destroyed.

The responsibilities of the medical services are, I think, more or less what would be expected, with possible exceptions of item No. 3. That, I do not think has been done in practically any yard we have seen, and is done in most modern industrial establishments, such as large factories. That is, it should be the joint responsibility of the medical and safety departments through the supply department to know the composition of paints, thinners, paint removers, and other chemicals used in the yard.

We have seen some astonishing sights from the health standpoint in men using a chemical which no one would knew the proper name of. They didn't know what they were working

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with, and in some cases they were chemicals the result of a careless use would be bad.

Now, there is no reason why, if the Maritime Commission and the Navy act as a unit, we cannot have what amounts to an enforced labeling, and that would simplify things a lot.

You may buy a can of something or other to thin paint with, and what we want to do is to make the manufacturer put the name of the ingredient on there. Now, you do not have to ask him to divulge the chemical formula, but you would save us a lot of headaches if that information was given.

Now, we have a laboratory on the west coast, but we do not want you to send in these chemicals fof us to analyze. It is a devil of a job, and it is very easy for the manufacturer who puts the labels on there to give us that information. We do not want to have him divulge the trade secrets or his secret formula because there is no reason why we should have it, but instead of "Quick Acting Solvent 22," or something like that, they might as well put on the composition, say, 10 per cent benzoin, 80 per cent phenol, or whatever it is, and let us know what it is. That would save you a lot of trouble, and also it would save us a lot of trouble.

Now, the way to get this is if you gentlemen feel about it the way we do, we will just say it is the sense of this meeting, and that the Maritime Commission and the Navy feel

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that this ought to be done, and we think we can put it through. We would have the strong backing in that case of most of the large manufacturing companies likewise, such as General Electric, General Motors, etc., because they are in the same boat, and they donot like these weird names in their chemicals any more than we do.

Now, I hope very much that you will give us your backing on that, and if you have any reason to disagree, perhaps when we get down to details or on that this afternoon, you can so indicate.

On Item No. 5, the future employment of women, and the necessity of making provisions in the meical set-up for their examinations and care, is perfeotly obvious, but I do not think it is being foreseen in a good many yards as it should be.

Cafeterias and canteens. By and large in the Maritime and the Navy contract yards, they could stand a very lot of improvement. We saw few of them that would compare favorably that you would see in a modern manufacturing plant. What ought to be done about them from the broad national policy, we are not yet quite sure, but something certainly should be done. We would urge strongly that the medical departments examine food handlers in these cafeterias, and have a regular scheme for such examinations.

Also, that the medical departments inspect any cafeterias

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or food dispensing arrangement that the men use, and inspect them, the way they are done, and in regular army and navy work. Now, those inspections ought to be at scheduled times, and they ought to be very frequent, and they ought to be thorough.

The water supply, sewerage and waste disposal by and large, we had little fault to find with any of them. There were one or two exceptions, but in general they were well handled. But, we think those suggestions for inspection on page 4 should be followed.

The provisions for salt tablets, particularly in the yards around the Gulf, are important, and in plenty of the east coast yards in the summer weather.

Now, part of our set-up for the future work will involve the laboratory which will be at the Harvard School of Public Health, and there will be another one at Berkeley, California. The work that we want these laboratories to do at first is to help you out in examination of urine specimens, and infected blood poisoning.

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We propose to discuss in the medical meeting this afternoon procedures for carrying out such analyses and we will be ready, we hope, very soon to help you out with such analyses ourselves, and then to send somebody who can show you how to do them, if you want to set them out routinely. We know, or we can show you beyond any argument, I think, that in

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practically all of the Maritime and many of the Navy operated yards know you are likely to get some lead poisoning, especially from welding on lead painted surfaces. As you know, it is pretty nearly routine procedure now in all Maritime yards to paint all metal surfaces as soon as possible, whether they have been erected or not, and very often the painted ones are taken out to the hull and welded in the proper position. The lead paint is not stripped off at that time before welding. The routine procedure is to weld with the paint on, and the heat of the arc gets rid of the paint, and the welding job is all done at one time.

There has never been any such work done yet industrially when lead poisoning has not resulted, and we think it is certain to result in the ship yards. The way to avoid it, obviously, is not to paint needlessly, and we are sure you will back us in suggesting to the Maritime Commission that steps be taken to reduce that practice of painting before it needs to be done.

We have no fault to find with ship construction in which a job is finished, and has been painted, and an inspector goes around and checks off, and says that that has to be rewelded. That sort of thing is inevitable. We are not criticizing that, but we are criticizing the needless prepainting, and we are firmly convinced that from the production standpoint that that can be easily stopped.

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Now, we will show you in the demonstration here this afternoon when we have a welding outfit going the procedures now adopted for sampling air, and it is a procedure that can be done by the safety engineers, or the procedures that our men will use when they come to visit you to check up on any such hazards as we are discussing here today.

Now, those sort of air analyses and checks need not be done often. We do not want to wish a needless chore on you that will interfere with more important duties for the safety engineer, and above all the last thing we want to do is to put through any restrictions that will slow up the ship-building program. If we can present to you the facts as we know they exist, why then maybe you can make suggestions yourselves to put through the things that you think are necessary.

The items under Section "B" on the use of safety departments in shipyards which has to do with respiratory protective equipment, and the like, we think that the respiratory program in the Maritime yards, and the Navy yards, have not been at all good. We would urge in the strongest possible terms that all yards now buy only and use only respiratory and respiratory protective equipment that has the approval of the United States Bureau of Mines Experiment Station at Pittsburgh. They have a laboratory that is especially adapted for this testing work, and they issue lists periodi-

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cally of firms supplying respirators which have the federal approval.

We have seen material used of protective equipment in practically every yard which is not at all suited to the job. The most reliable consultant you can get on that today is the United States Bureau of Mines, which, of course, is a federal organization and whose information is open to all of you immediately.

We will have here, and show you this afternoon, and tomorrow, a respirator, or respirators which have such approval, respirators which give aid, adequate protection, et cetera, in welding of lead painted surfaces.

Now, there is an item on 3-B on sterilization of respirators which perhaps will be a useful scheme to you, and also you will notice in the last paragraph of the last page on 3-B, reference to the National Safety Council sheet governing the same thing more fully.

Section C is devoted to a very brief discussion of seven items of industrial diseases which is likely to occur in shipyards, or in many cases already have. The most important of them is the flash burn, foreign bodies in the eyes, and then probably lead poisoning. On page 2-C is solvent vapors, and solvent vapors can likely be eliminated by compulsory labeling of chemicals or can be cut down extremely.

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3-C refers to zinc fume fever from welding galvanized metals.

The next section has to do with fiberglas, and then on 4-C, it has to do with asbestosis, and silicosis. The asbestosis is caused in connection with the handling of asbestos. That is not unlike silicosis in its effects, and we rather expect it to occur in shipyards, because we have seen asbestos being handled in installation work with little or no precautions.

Asbestosis, silicosis, lead poisoning from solvent vapors, and lead can really not be controlled satisfactorily unless systematic, periodic examinations of men are enforced. I might say, it is very difficult or practically impossible to control it by urinalysis. It has never been able to control it that way so far that I know of.

In Section D we have ventilation standards, the discussion of which would be out of order now, but we will discuss them this afternoon, and again tomorrow with any groups who are especially concerned. I know there are quite a few men here today who are very much interested in ventilation in ship construction, starting from the double bottoms, and going right on up, and there is nothing that we would like more than get into such a discussion with them. We will work that in tomorrow at any time you gentlemen see fit.

I hope you have made some notes on this. We propose

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this afternoon for those interested in the medical aspects, to meet in this room at two o'clock, and those interested in the safety engineering aspects will meet with Mr. Roche in the American Room on the mezzanine floor at two o'clock. Then, at three-thirty o'clock we will shift and we will then give the same welding demonstration here, and ventilation to the safety group and Mr. Roche will go over his stuff to some extent with the medical group.

As a result of the conferences this afternoon, we hope that we can iron out perhaps most of the difficulties, objections, additions, or subtractions that you have to make to these proposed standards, and that tomorrow we can formulate it into final shape.

Mr. Roche and I apologize jointly for the fact that there is a certain amount of duplication in his reports, and ours. Some of these things are safety engineering, and some are medical, and some certainly are both.

He is interested in preventing accidents, and disease, just as much as we are. So, if we do overlap, we have no apologies. You will notice that we demand a safety store and so does he, and just so long as you have that material available where the men can easily and conveniently get safety equipment, we have no objection. We do not care if it is in there four times, so long as we get the store.

The organization which we will have to control health

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will consist of two physicians from men in industrial work in the Navy yards. Dr. Sessions was with us this summer on this tour, and he will be one of them. There will be six men, three of whom you will see this afternoon in the demonstration that we propose to give. They are engineers, and chemists trained especially in industrial medical manner on the prevention of disease.

One of the doctor's headquarters will be in the east, and one in the west, and there will be two ensigns to cover the east coast and one to cover the west coast, one the Great Lakes, and one the Gulf, and I have to cover all the rest of them, and this gentleman (Mr. Ring) is our boss.

Now, our job is to help you. We will be available to come and see you and help you at anything that we can. We have had a couple of requests from yards now to go back on specific investigations, to see the hazards which they thought that they had, or did have, and to help tell them ways of improving conditions, et cetera. That is what we are for, and that is what we are being paid for, and if you do not make use of us, or if you do not make us work for you, we will be self-liquidating and resigned. That is what the organization is set up to do, and if you do not make us work, then I think that that will be your fault. We can do it, and we would like to do it.

Now, I beg of you to make notes and perhaps save your

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questions, but get this ready for this afternoon. Thank you very much. (Applause)

CHAIRMAN RING: Well, I just had another demonstration of Harvard philosophy that has always been puzzling to me. If I am not mistaken, I heard Mr. Drinker just now say that Mr. Roche and he wanted to apologize jointly for overlapping, and two minutes later, he said, "If you find any overlapping there, we have no apologies to make." Sooner or later, as years go on, I will find out how to assimilate those things.

In the meantime, I think we ought to hear from the Navy who is just as much interested in this program as the Maritime Commission, and which is bearing an equal, if not a heavier brunt of the load and the expense. The cooperation that has been extended by the Navy has been something that has been fine, especially in Washington, where sometimes they find one agency and another quietly and politely fighting with each other.

I want to present to you at this time Lieutenant Commander D. E. Carlson, who is the Navy representative on safety and health.

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER CARLSON: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, but I would like to say that Mr. Desjardines is one of our chief engineers, and I just want to say that we will cooperate with you to the fullest extent. However, we are going to sit back on the sidelines and let Mr. Ring boss

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