

Labor Occupational Health Program

MONITOR

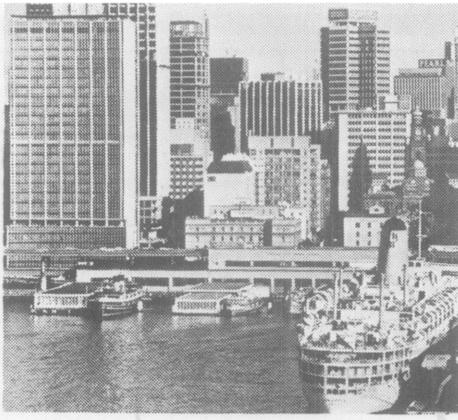
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HEALTH AND SAFETY IN CANADA, AUSTRALIA





Labor Occupational Health Program MONITOR

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On the Cover:

Skyline of Sydney, Australia. This issue of Monitor features union health and safety activity in both Australia (pp. 7-9) and Canada (pp. 4-6.) (Photo: Australia Tourist Commission.)

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STAFF

<i>Pat Ayers</i>	<i>Janet Bertinuson</i>
<i>Kate Caldwell</i>	<i>Paul Chown</i>
<i>Larry Drapkin</i>	<i>Ken Light</i>
<i>Joanne Molloy</i>	<i>Brenda Presley</i>
<i>Susan Salisbury</i>	<i>Sharon Samek</i>
<i>Sidney Weinstein</i>	<i>Donald Whorton</i>

Gene Darling, Editor

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MOVING?

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"See that sign up there, Mobey. That's our new safety program and I expect you workers to ..."

—Workers' Health Action Group, Australia

Stress on the Job: One Worker's Story

(LOHP staff member Joanne Molloy has interviewed a number of Bay Area working people in connection with her work on occupational stress and its solutions. She is preparing an article on union approaches to stress for an upcoming issue of Monitor. The unusual interview below, a candid discussion with shipyard crane operator Alma Hamer, raises a variety of issues about women, stress, blue-collar work, and unions which will be treated in more detail in the article.)

by Joanne Molloy

The following is an interview with one worker about stress. Her responses reveal how she feels about herself, whether her potential is fulfilled on the job, how conscious she is of workplace conditions, and how she is affected by them.

When I arrived at Alma Hamer's house, I found it comfortable, with all new furniture, china in cabinets, and several imposing hunting trophies staring me down. Alma was out shopping. I said to her husband Mike, a field construction worker and member of the Boilermakers' Union, "Maybe I should interview you." He jumped back two steps and said, "Oh, no, no, no. Alma's the talker. Let's wait for her."

A bit of background is in order. Mike's father was one of the founding organizers of Boilermakers' Local 10, and the only non-white officer for decades. He was a shipyard rigger by trade. His common-law wife Jeanne is a half-white, half-Native American daughter of a Wobblie. She migrated as a teen from Oklahoma to California in the Dust Bowl days by doing figure skating shows across the Southwest. They had ten children. Today Jeanne is the leader of a Bernal Heights (San Francisco) tenants' organization fighting real estate speculation and gentrification.

Alma, 26, has been married since the age of 18. She and Mike have two children. She has been a crane operator on the day shift at Bethlehem Shipyards for about a year. She has recently been named a shop steward in her union, Operating Engineers Local 3. She earns \$11.72 an hour plus benefits. She is an ebullient, bright, down-to-earth woman.

Joanne: How are you guys making out?

Alma: We're doing OK financially. Mike was on strike for a month at the

same time I was laid off for three weeks, and that was hard. We'll have to tighten our belts. No splurging. We've got our debts almost all paid off from when we were credit card maniacs.

Joanne: What is Mike doing right now?

Alma: He's still in the Boilermakers but he's not rigging. He's doing field construction, building a cement plant. He's making \$19 an hour but he's 350 feet in the air with nothing but a beam to hold onto.

Joanne: Is this your first job after raising the kids?

Alma: Hell, no. I've done painting, carpentry, janitorial, bank clerical, sales, Telex, PBX, beauticians' school. A "jack of all trades," you might say.

Joanne: You're probably one of the few women crane operators in the country. What made you go into blue collar work?

Alma: My last job was office work. I was pulling down only \$225 every two weeks. I just couldn't afford to walk back in, and leave the soap operas for no good reason! Then I did janitorial work for \$5.50 an hour. Not too bad. Blue collar work—that's where the money is. I got a job later as a rigger in the yard, and then the crane operator job opened up and I went for it.

Joanne: How has your health been since you took the job?

Alma: Pretty good, but I feel like I've aged. When I first started, my complexion was breaking out all the time. My body feels kind of worn out—it's hard to explain. Working around dirt and grease, being outside in the weather, the particles from the sandblasting—my skin's not used to it. My skin is rough; my hands are rough and calloused. My features have changed. I try to take care of it with creams and stuff.

Joanne: Do you feel tired a lot?

Alma: No, not tired. Just like I've aged.

Joanne: How do you feel about that?

Alma: At this money it's worth it. It doesn't bother me...but interview me again in eight months!

Joanne: Do you feel tension?

Alma: When I first started, I used to wake up in the middle of the night because my legs were cramped up, and I had a backache. It was tension from being up in the crane. But I learned to handle it. Another worker told me I wasn't relaxed enough in the crane. I said to myself, "Of course you're not relaxed! You BS'ed your way into this job—now can you make it?" I had been a rigger for awhile. Riggers work under the crane, and you know how much you depend on a crane operator. You're depending on the crane operator to keep awake, or she can make you look like a pancake. Her drum can free fall if her foot's not on the brake. You even have to be careful with your body movements in a crane.

Joanne: How do you unwind when you get home?

Alma: I pick up the kids, go to Safeway, start dinner, and then make myself a cup of coffee and read the newspaper. That's about it.

Joanne: How about weekends?

Alma: People come over and we party until 4 AM. We do another marathon Saturday night. But me and Mike have been talking—it's too expensive! We have a car that's half dead, and we could have two by now.

Joanne: Some people get grouchy when they get home, or throw plates, or take it out on the kids. How about you?

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Canada

New Health and Safety Efforts in Ontario

The following two stories describe new health and safety groups which have been formed in the province of Ontario, Canada. WOSH (Windsor Occupational Safety and Health), the subject of the first story, has developed in a Canadian industrial city along lines similar to those of so-called "COSH" groups in the U.S., as a coalition of labor and professionals in one metropolitan area. As the article explains, however, there are important differences between WOSH and U.S. groups. The Occupational Health and Safety Training Center of the Ontario Federation of Labour, subject of the second story, is an educational effort by the labor movement which receives government funding, like some of the union-sponsored "New Directions" programs in the U.S., recipients of federal OSHA grants, which have been described in previous issues of Monitor.

Labor - Community Coalition Forms in Canada

The Windsor Occupational Safety and Health Council

(Excerpted from *Canadian Dimension*, vol. 14, no. 7, June, 1980.)

Over the past year, Windsor, Ontario has rapidly become a major center of the occupational health movement in Canada. Occupational health hazards have long been present in this industrial city. Foundries, paint booths, plastic parts factories, and asbestos brake-lining production lines are just some of the workplaces which make this city not only a major producer of automobiles but also of industrially caused diseases.

But only recently has the fight for rights to a safe workplace become an important focus of workers' energies. Central to the escalation of the fight has been the development of the Windsor Occupational Safety and Health Council (WOSH).

Committees for Occupational Safety and Health (so-called "COSH" groups) have existed in the United States since the early 1970's. The one established in Windsor in 1979 is the first created in Canada on a city-wide basis by rank and file unionists.

The Ontario Federation of Labor (OFL) organized a course for health and safety representatives in Windsor during the spring of 1979. That course, to-

gether with a public forum on asbestos exposure held in July, 1979, gave rise to WOSH.

Prior to 1979, some factories had union health and safety representatives. At the Canadian Rock Salt Mine in Windsor, the United Auto Workers (UAW) had a health and safety committee which had been studying diesel emissions from underground machinery, which seemed to be associated with headaches, eye and throat irritation, drowsiness, coughing up of unusual sputum, and more serious long-term effects. The carcinogen benzo(a)pyrene was found to be present in the diesel emissions. At Wyeth Ltd., a producer of birth control pills and tranquilizers, an OCAW health and safety representative was studying complaints from female workers about irregular menstrual periods and headaches which appeared related to concentrations of airborne estrogen, one of the ingredients in the birth control pills. A male worker had developed enlarged breasts at Wyeth, also, and there was concern about isosorbide dinitrate, a heart medication manufactured there. At Bendix

Corporation, which produces asbestos linings for brakes, another UAW representative was compiling information about cancers suffered by Bendix workers.

PUBLIC FORUM

The public forum on asbestos in July, 1979 was called by UAW and the Ontario Public Interest Research Group (OPIRG) to discuss the situation at Bendix. The union leafletted the two Bendix plants in Windsor, and OPIRG distributed leaflets to residents in the neighborhood, since it was known that a health hazard could exist outside because of the way asbestos was dumped. Earlier that year, the UAW had presented the provincial Workers' Compensation Board with three cases of Bendix workers with cancer of the larynx. About 135 people attended the forum, including a large number of people who were not Bendix workers. As a result, awareness was increased among the workers in the city about common problems they were facing.

The forum also resulted in renewed publicity for the issue. The Windsor and Detroit media, and national news services in Canada have, since that time, paid close attention to activities around occupational health in Windsor. Major articles appear regularly in the local newspaper, and substantial television time has been devoted to health and safety. The media attention built community support, involved other workers in the issue, and made the workers already involved in the struggle feel that their activities were important.

A few months after the forum, several of the major health and safety committees in the city began using the new media interest to publicize their research. In the fall, some committee members began a program of educating high school students in their rights under the Ontario Health and Safety Act (Bill 70.) This bill affords the worker the right to refuse work that she/he deems unsafe. There are also provisions for health and safety committees in every workplace with over twenty workers, and controls are required on toxic substances in the workplace.

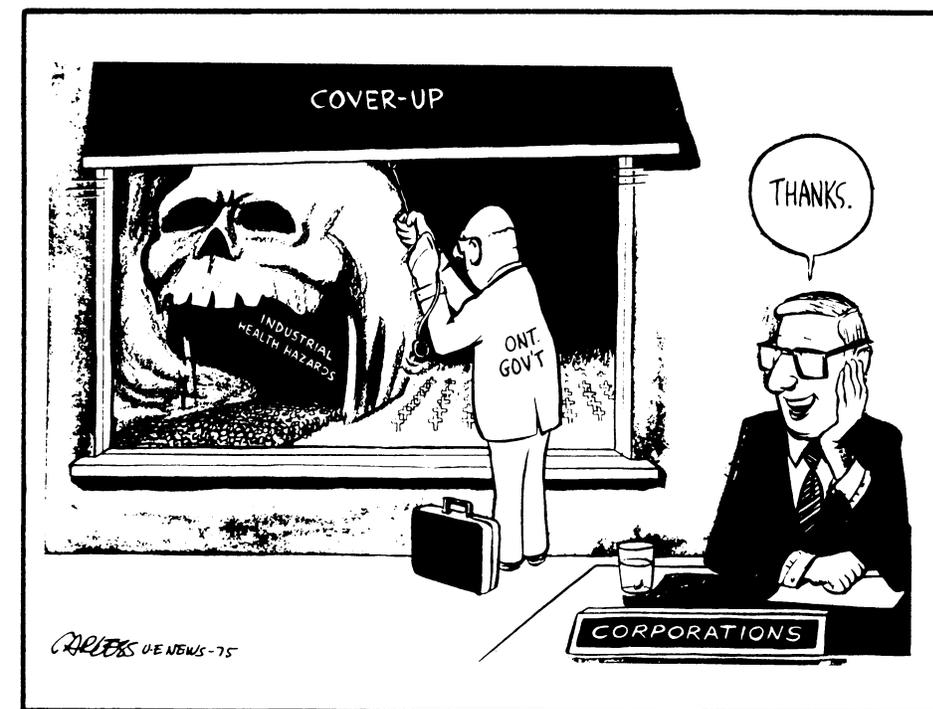
During November, 1979, the first meetings were held establishing the Windsor Occupational Safety and Health Council. In early 1980, a constitution was approved, and officers were elected. Gerry Becigneul, a UAW activist at Canadian Rock Salt, was elected chairperson.

PLASTICS INVESTIGATION

WOSH established as a first priority an investigation of the plastics industry in Windsor. Workers at some plastics plants were experiencing headaches, nausea, hair and skin discoloration, respiratory difficulties, loss of feelings in the hands, and severe nose bleeds. It was suspected that some of the symptoms were related to vinyl chloride, a known carcinogen.

WOSH called a meeting of plastics workers from a number of plants to develop a questionnaire, and about 25 attended. WOSH wanted to bring together workers on an industrywide basis because of the danger of plant closure. If a single plant were made the target, it would be easy and inexpensive for the plant to move, since the plastics industry is labor intensive—there is not much investment in machinery and equipment.

At the meeting, plastics workers from several plants told about having



—UE News

the same symptoms. Everyone realized that a major health problem had been discovered. A questionnaire for other plastics workers was developed, and was ultimately translated into three languages besides English. The information gathered from these questionnaires is now being assessed.

ASBESTOS AT BENDIX

In early 1980, WOSH released Ontario Ministry of Labor documents showing that Bendix failed to comply with directives issued against it in 1966, and also that the Ministry had failed to enforce its own directives. This news was made all the more dramatic by the fact that a 34-year-old Bendix worker has just been diagnosed as having two inoperable lung tumors; pathologists said these tumors contained asbestos fibers. These developments shocked even the WOSH people, and received national media attention.

Bendix health and safety committee-person Mike Caverhill, exercising his rights under Bill 70, refused to work in the asbestos departments. Under the law, such a work refusal immediately brings in provincial inspectors. Again, there was national media coverage. Extensive monitoring was done. Bendix claimed that air concentrations of asbestos were below the required limits,

but Ontario Ministry of Labor chief physician Dr. Peter Pelmeur admitted that, even if the workplace was within the present standards, it was possible that the asbestos standard was too high. He suggested that public hearings should be held to determine asbestos levels and establish standards for other toxic substances.

In February, 1980, Ralph Nader held two public meetings in Windsor, emphasizing the menace of asbestos. Two days after Nader's visit, the Bendix Corporation in the U.S. announced that it was selling one of its plants in Windsor for a parking lot. 65 jobs would be eliminated. Windsor already had the highest rate of unemployment of the 22 largest cities in Canada and now, in the middle of a health and safety struggle, the ultimate corporate weapon was used—a plant shutdown.

The day after the closure was announced, the Ontario Workmen's Compensation Board stated that it had rejected ten of the 17 claims submitted by the UAW on behalf of Bendix workers. Although the Board failed to clarify the reasons for the public, many of the cases were turned down on technicalities—lack of a surviving dependent to whom a pension could be awarded, use of outdated standards, or failure to

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ONTARIO

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meet the legally required ten continuous years of exposure.

The impact of these events, happening as they did in quick succession, was devastating to the Bendix workforce. Many of the workers felt that perhaps the union had over-dramatized the asbestos hazard and that the plant closure was a punishment for all the publicity. The timing from the corporation's and government's perspectives was excellent.

WOSH and the Bendix UAW local are now planning a response which includes mailing a letter to the homes of the Bendix workers explaining the company's tactics, distributing the OPIRG asbestos pamphlet, and organizing another Bendix public forum. If Bendix is able to close without substantial resistance from the trade union movement in Ontario, it will be a major setback to the health and safety movement. Already this situation is having negative effects upon the workers at other plants in Windsor. For example, the workers at Wyeth and in the plastics industry who were beginning to organize around occupational health are having second thoughts.

ROLE OF PROFESSIONALS AND UNIONS

Two characteristics of WOSH members stand out: they are not professionals in occupational health and most are not members of the union hierarchy.

The almost total absence of professional people is unlike the situation with "COSH" groups in the U.S. These groups were usually instigated by scientists, medical doctors, health care workers, and industrial hygienists. The absence of professionals in WOSH has forced the workers to educate themselves, and to become conversant with scientific data. Workers have been the initiators and full participants in tasks like investigating conditions or putting together briefs. But the absence of professionals has been a problem at certain critical times. Professionals could provide better access to technical literature and could provide raw data for workers to assess.

The upper echelons of the union hierarchy in Windsor have not been as involved in WOSH as union health and safety representatives or rank and file workers. The UAW is the dominant union in Windsor, but WOSH, through its access to media and through its interaction with workers from a wide

range of unions in the city, had developed a publicly known, community-based group that was not dependent on any one union. However, after Ralph Nader made a sharp attack on the union bureaucracies for not working hard enough to protect the health of the workers in the plants, the Windsor and District Labor Council endorsed WOSH, and Nader's remarks had an impact on a number of UAW officials. It is clear that at some point the union leadership will have to be brought in—just as workers have to negotiate with companies to achieve a living wage, workers will have to negotiate into their contracts adequate safeguards for safety and health. The support of the union hierarchy will be necessary to make these matters central negotiating concerns. As pressure from the rank and file increases, this is sure to happen.

For further information, write: OPIRG-Windsor, Cody Hall, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario N9B 3P4.

—Jim Brophy, John Jackson, and WOSH

Ontario Federation of Labour

Canadian Health and Safety Center Established

The Ontario Federation of Labour established an Occupational Health and Safety Training Center in 1978 with funding from the Ontario Government Provincial Lottery. The initial grant was for one year, but the Center applied for and received an additional three years' funding.

In its first year, the Center developed a comprehensive student manual for participants in training sessions as well as an instructor's manual. These manuals were developed for use in a four-week instructor training session and subsequent classes taught by Center-trained instructors. 19 instructors went through the program in the first year. All their lost time and instruction costs were picked up by the Center. The instructors in turn trained over 200 health and safety representatives throughout Ontario. Each participant received the student manual at Center expense.

In the second year, the Center trained 134 instructors, who reached more than 1300 workers. The worker training ses-

sions began to become institutionalized as community colleges, labor councils, and local unions assumed responsibility for paying the instructors, who taught classes under these groups' auspices, with materials provided by the Center. This move will ensure that the program will continue even if the Center receives no further funding.

MATERIALS

The manuals written by Center staff cover a variety of health and safety topics, including: Introduction to Safety; Legislation; Health and Safety Committees; Controls; the Body; Noise; Materials Handling; and Toxic Substances. The instructors' manual also includes teaching notes for each topic. Resources such as audiovisual aids are to be used with each lesson.

The Center has developed slide shows on the body, cancer, and noise; and a film on the "right to know." Others are currently under development.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Center staff have other programs as well. In the past year they have developed training sessions specific to industries (such as grain milling), occupations (such as health care and office workers), and specific health hazards. The Center also has a technical assistance component, and answers numerous requests for information on chemicals and other health hazards. Also, the Center maintains a collection of written and audiovisual resources which are available to workers and unions. A bimonthly newsletter, *At the Source*, is also published by the Center.

For more information, contact: Ontario Federation of Labour, Health and Safety Resources Center, 15 Gervais Drive, Suite 703, Don Mills, Ontario M3C 1Y8, Canada.

—Janet Bertinuson

Health and Safety in Australia

(In late 1980, Eddy Micallef, Occupational Health and Safety Officer for the Amalgamated Metal Workers and Shipwrights' Union in Australia, visited LOHP to share information on the state of trade union health and safety activity in his country. The following articles are based on discussions with Mr. Micallef and on materials which he supplied us.)

The Amalgamated Metal Workers and Shipwrights' Union

The Amalgamated Metal Workers and Shipwrights' Union is Australia's biggest, and one of its newest, trade unions. Four earlier unions merged between 1972 and 1976 to form one of the most effective organizations in Australian union history, with 160,000 members throughout Australia in 1979.

Australia is a country whose labor movement has a reputation for militant, direct action. Americans have probably read of "bans" imposed by Australian construction unions on work on building projects in areas where the environment would be damaged, thus effectively killing the projects. Direct action also played a role in the formation of the AMWSU. The new, merged union was formed only after a battle with conservative political parties and the courts. In May, 1971, 150,000 metal industry workers stopped work and attended meetings to protest this interference with internal union affairs. They expressed a determination to proceed with the amalgamation either with or without legal recognition. This solidarity and strength resulted in the defeat of both the political and legal challenges to the AMWSU.

The AMWSU is affiliated with the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), the central governing body of the trade union movement in Australia and the equivalent of the AFL-CIO in the U.S. After a planned merger, now underway, with a national group of white collar unions (the Australian Council of Salaried and Professional Associations), the ACTU will have over two million members.

The AMWSU is also affiliated with the Australian Labor Party.



*Australian metalworkers at a mass meeting.
(Photo courtesy of AMWSU.)*

PLATFORM

The AMWSU has been one of the first unions in Australia to adopt a comprehensive national policy on occupational health and safety. The push for more union involvement in this area grew out of the work of the AMWSU branch in the state of Victoria (Melbourne.) The Victoria branch has worked closely with the Workers' Health Action Group, a rank-and-file, inter-union organization in Melbourne, and with the Workers' Health Centre there. These groups provide education, technical assistance, and engage in some political action.

In 1979, the AMWSU National Conference resolved to appoint two full-time safety officers to the union's national staff. That year and in 1980, the annual National Conferences adopted the elements of a detailed union policy on the question. It includes the following:

- Health and Safety Committees should be established nationally and in each state;
- The Union accepts the responsibility for providing education programs and leadership in the development of worker action in the struggle for adequate industrial safety and health;

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AUSTRALIA

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- Uniquely Australian research should be conducted by specialized union staff and others, carefully evaluating the research of other countries and raising the level of awareness among the public of the total cost of workers' ill-health;
- Government allocations for research on hazardous substances should be considerably increased; a properly representative government commission should make financing available in the form of grants to universities, other institutions, community medical groups, trade unions, and ethnic bodies;
- Uniform health and safety legislation and regulations should apply throughout Australia, to replace the present discrepancies from state to state.

The 1980 National Conference also passed resolutions dealing with asbestos, deafness, welding, low level toxicity, and women. An immediate ban on use of asbestos or asbestos products was demanded, with a phase-out of all existing asbestos within three years, except where it presents no hazard. A noise level of 80 dB was called for, to be achieved through engineering controls with provision of personal protective equipment only as a stop-gap measure. On welding, the Conference passed a resolution warning that "new techniques such as plasma arc are being introduced without proper precautions." It recommended that welders should not handle welding innovations until properly satisfied that it is safe to do so. Regarding low level toxicity, the Conference urged members to "be aware of this hazard, and demand clean air in the workplace and proper protection."

The Conference's resolution on "women and migrant workers" states that since "women and migrants comprise the bulk of the semi and unskilled workers in the metal industry, they are in a particularly hazardous position because of the nature of their work and their relative inexperience." Particularly emphasized in the resolution are injuries affecting hands, wrists, and arms brought about by rapid, repetitive work (so called "repetition injuries" such as tenosynovitis), and power press injuries resulting from guards which are faulty or which have been removed.

ON THE JOB

Among the concepts adopted by the 1980 Conference dealing with workplace organization for health and safety were the following:

- Company safety committees should not replace shop floor organization and should in no way be used to inhibit industrial action on health and safety; union members should accept representation on such committees only if they have real value and if regular reports back to the membership can be made;
- Each shop should develop a campaign on health and safety, to include: a set of its own standards, a union safety committee, safety stewards, work stoppage without loss of pay on safety and health issues, the right to a copy of medical records, provision of safety clothes by the company, access of union experts into plants, payment for safety courses by the company, and a company obligation to notify workers of the health effects of all products being produced.

The Conference also called upon the ACTU to recognize health and safety as a "matter of importance" to all Australian workers. Subsequently the ACTU has set up an official Trade Union Occupational Health Unit within its structure.

ARBITRATION SYSTEM

Although the AMWSU favors a system of free collective bargaining for all its members, many industries in Australia, including many organized by the AMWSU, are governed by a legal system of compulsory arbitration introduced over seventy years ago to prevent strikes. The national (Commonwealth) arbitration system attempts to regulate national standards of wages, hours, and conditions, so that in industries which the system covers, arbitration awards rather than contracts govern basic labor-management relationships. These are supplemented by "industrial action" where the unions find it necessary. The AMWSU points out that since arbitration is a government-sponsored process, it is often used as the instrument by which government policies (wage policies, etc.) are imposed upon workers.

Unfortunately, arbitration commissioners have not generally been willing to make rulings on hazards beyond those prescribed by legislation, unless there are no laws on a particular subject or those existing are demonstrably inadequate for a particular group of workers. Many arbitration commissioners feel that rulings on health and safety would impinge upon management prerogative, would impose unacceptable costs on industry, or would require more professional expertise than the commissioners possess.

A top priority of the AMWSU is the replacement of the arbitration system by collective bargaining.

—Gene Darling



Metalworkers' demonstration, Richmond, Victoria, Australia. (Photo courtesy of AMWSU.)

Following are two articles from *Workers' Health*, a newsletter of the rank-and-file Workers' Health Action Group in Melbourne. Subscriptions are available at \$5.00 per year from: WHAG, c/o Vehicle Builders Union, 61-65 Drummond St., Carlton South, Victoria 3053, Australia. The articles provide a sampler of Australian trade union health and safety concerns.

An Old Problem and a New Concern

by **Jim Roulston**

Victorian President, AMWSU

Occupational health and safety has become a major new area of interest and concern in the community. However, despite this concern there is no sign of improvement. The latest figures indicate that the situation is still deteriorating.

Between 1971 and 1975, which is the last year for which figures are available, the Victorian workforce grew by 6% while the number of work injuries grew by 12%. According to the (Australian) National Safety Council, one worker in twelve, or 8.3% of the workforce, are injured on the job every year. Six thousand men and women are away from work every day because of injury. An estimated 350,000 workers lose time through injury every year. This results in the loss of 36 million working hours, or one billion dollars worth of production, annually.

The responsibility for this situation rests with management. As James Tye of the British Safety Council said recently, "Failure of management to adequately train workers is responsible for 70% of on-the-job accidents." The

government's role is also poor. Victoria halved the budget of the state government's Industrial Safety Advisory Council in 1977-78.

But the new interest and concern is about a new sort of risk—long term exposure to noise, chemicals, asbestos and the like. It is no exaggeration to say that the sweat shops of the nineteenth century have become the cancer shops of the twentieth century.

Asbestos is only the tip of the iceberg, but it does offer a clear insight into the problems behind these sorts of issues. American firms have been found to have suppressed information about the harmful effects of asbestos, ignored their own research, and withheld medical reports from employees which showed that they could have asbestosis.

The incidence of occupationally related disease is widespread. Coke oven workers in steel mills are ten times more likely to develop cancer than the average citizen. Workers in metals, stone, clay, and glass production suffer abnormally high rates of silicosis, emphysema, and other respiratory diseases. The list goes on: coal miners with black lung; petroleum refinery workers, chemical workers, and nuclear materials

workers with cancer.

These connections are known, but the effects of the thousands of chemicals in use in industry today and the hundreds introduced each year are not.

Organized labor and the environmental movement have clear and common interests. At the source of every pollutant and poison dumped into the atmosphere, or waters, or onto the marketplace there are working men and women who are exposed to the first doses of the poison.

Employers, government, and the medical and scientific professions have failed to meet the needs of workers for healthy and safe workplaces.

In the end, occupational health and safety is not a scientific, technical, or medical issue. It is an industrial, economic, and political issue. It relates to who controls the production process and in whose interests they control it. Workers have always had to protect their health and safety the same way they have protected other aspects of life, through industrial action and through challenging management's control of the production process.

—Workers' Health

Sit-In for Safety

Safety on the job is very much an issue at Australian Motor Industries (AMI) because of a sit-in and strike in August, 1980.

The strike was provoked by the one-day suspension of several members. Fork lift drivers had complained of problems such as faulty brakes and steering, which were not uncommon. A call was made to the Department of Labour and Industry to inspect the fork lifts. Of the forty-one fork lifts, the government inspectors examined only nine, finding many faults. But when requested to inspect the other thirty-two (many with serious faults), the inspectors replied that they didn't have the time and that it was the responsibility of the fork lift drivers to inspect. All attempts to get the Company to fix the fork lifts failed, so industrial action was taken. Members participating in the action received the one-day suspensions.

Another issue in the subsequent strike was reinstatement of three workers who had been dismissed for absenteeism. Of the three sacked workers, one was on workers' compensation with a double hernia incurred when fitting window glass on the assembly line. A second person was sacked because of his refusal to accept the Company nurse's advice to return to work after slashing his hand on the job. He went to his own doctor that night, who recommended that he have four days off work. The third person was sacked for excessive absenteeism, but had only taken twelve days off in nine months, certainly not excessive in the vehicle industry.

The injuries that occur on the job at AMI are not uncommon in the vehicle industry. The list includes back injuries, hernias, slashed hands, eye injuries, and ear problems.

The Union contends that rather than

sack people injured on the job or suffering from an illness that is probably work related, the problem should be investigated and the cause eradicated.

Thin cloth gloves, cold drafts from open doors, no free safety footwear, and lack of ventilation have all been cited by members as possible causes of workers compensation problems.

One gain made by the Union as a result of the strike was an agreement by management to set up a Safety Committee, with the Union being represented by the Senior and Deputy Senior Steward. The Committee will be a channel for workers to report safety hazards as they occur.

The Company's carefree attitude on health and safety has changed as a result of the stoppage, but the struggle must be a continuing one.

—Workers' Health



Donovan Postpones Some OSHA Regulations

New Secretary of Labor Raymond Donovan, in his first major action since winning Senate confirmation February 3, has postponed implementation of several new proposed Labor Department regulations. Included among them is the labeling standard described below; the article was prepared prior to Donovan's announcement. Since the labeling proposal is no longer active, having been "withdrawn indefinitely," no comments are now being solicited by OSHA nor will public hearings be held.

Another OSHA regulation which has been postponed is the "walkaround" pay rule, which would have provided workers a guarantee of pay for time spent in accompanying OSHA inspectors. (See Monitor, January-February, 1981, p.5.)

Donovan said that his action was being taken "to fulfill the president's pledge to scrutinize regulations... with the goal of removing barriers to job creation and economic growth."

New Proposed Standard

OSHA Wants Labeling of Hazardous Chemicals

In early January, 1981, federal OSHA proposed a new safety and health standard which would require the labeling of hazardous chemicals used in manufacturing. It would provide for precise chemical identification and appropriate warnings on containers of hazardous chemicals found in 328,000 manufacturing facilities where more than 20 million workers are employed.

In announcing the proposal, OSHA head Eula Bingham linked the need for labeling to the new OSHA standard (issued in May, 1980) which permits workers to obtain copies of employer-maintained medical and exposure records. "Once the standard we are proposing today goes into effect," Bingham said, "employees will know not only the current state of their health, but will have the information they need to prevent future occupational illness."

"Workers have a right to know what substances they work with on the job, and today many of them don't," Bingham continued. "Workers who know what they are working with and what

the hazards of these substances are will be more likely to take the necessary precautions to safeguard their health. If they develop health problems... they will have concrete information to give to their personal physicians."

According to Bingham, NIOSH has found that only 10% of trade name products are labeled with their precise chemical identity, and over a thousand new chemicals are being marketed every year.

Bingham expressed the view that current labeling requirements by other federal agencies are inadequate because "labels are not necessarily required in the workplace or designed to inform workers." She added that "States are beginning to recognize the need for workplace labeling—nine require it—but that's a long way from the uniform, consistent labeling that could prove most helpful to workers." (See *Monitor*, September-October, 1980, p.8, for information on the laws in California, New York, and Maine.)

U.S. Supreme Court

Partial Stay of Lead Standard Granted

On December 8, 1980, the U.S. Supreme Court granted a partial stay of federal OSHA's lead standard. The court also partially stayed the August, 1980 decision of the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, which had almost completely upheld the standard. (See *Monitor*, Sept.-Oct., 1980, p.6 for details of the Court of Appeals decision.)

The Lead Industries Association and other employer groups sought to stay the standard pending the filing and disposition of petitions asking further judicial review of the case. The Court stayed those portions of the standard which require engineering and work practice controls, rather than respirators, to achieve the permissible exposure level. Thus the industry will not have to begin major construction of new facilities to comply with the standard until a final Supreme Court ruling on the case. Also stayed were controversial standard provisions requiring zinc protoporphyrin (ZPP) tests for workers and a multiple physician review mechanism when workers dispute company doctors' findings.

The Court declined to stay the medical removal protection provisions of the standard, which require that alternative work at no loss of pay or benefits be provided workers whose blood lead levels exceed the legal limit. It also declined to stay federal OSHA's ongoing hearings on the feasibility of lead controls in certain industries, which had been ordered by the Court of Appeals.

OSHA Grants Variance to Chrysler

On November 7, 1980, federal OSHA granted Chrysler Corporation a variance from several provisions of standards limiting worker exposure to lead and inorganic arsenic.

The variance was the result of a cooperative effort among Chrysler, the United Auto Workers (UAW), and federal OSHA, according to OSHA head Dr. Eula Bingham. Dr. Bingham said that the new order provides Chrysler workers with protection equal to, or greater than, that provided by the current standards, and will enable OSHA to establish a uniform compliance plan

for all Chrysler plants. It applies to three plants in Detroit; two each in Warren, Michigan, and Fenton, Missouri; and one each in Belvedere, Illinois and Newark, Delaware.

Chrysler has made a commitment to eliminate employee exposure to lead and inorganic arsenic by January 1, 1987, barring economic or technical limitations.

Solder booths, where excess solder containing both arsenic and lead is removed by grinding, are the site of much of the exposure in auto plants. Chrysler will provide powered respir-

ators for all solder grind booth employees, will monitor airborne arsenic and lead levels inside the respirator hoods, will continue its medical surveillance and blood testing program regardless of airborne monitoring results, and will submit detailed annual reports to OSHA. It will also provide medical removal economic protection for employees overexposed to lead.

Two other major U.S. auto manufacturers, General Motors and Ford Motor Co., have also applied to OSHA for variances. GM's application was granted earlier this year.

Clearinghouse



Machine Safeguarding

New OSHA Pamphlet

Federal OSHA has issued a new, 73-page pamphlet, **Concepts and Techniques of Machine Safeguarding**. Up to five free copies may be obtained from: OSHA Publications, Room S-1212, 3rd St. and Constitution Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20210. Specify OSHA Publication 3067.

The pamphlet is a training and education aid that suggests practical ways to control common mechanical dangers in the workplace. It describes the advantages and limitations of several safeguarding methods, including various types of machine guards, safety devices, feeding and ejecting apparatus, warning shields, and holding tools. Drawings illustrate the application of each type protection.

Worker Rehabilitation: Conference, Seminars in Berkeley

Staff of Berkeley's Worker Evaluation and Rehabilitation Clinic (WERC) will participate in a two-day conference on "Psychological Effects of Newly Acquired Disabilities," sponsored by University of California Extension, in Berkeley on April 17 and 18, 1981.

WERC also sponsors bi-monthly seminars on occupational health problems at its headquarters, 2315 Prince St. in Berkeley. To date, the series has included talks on Swedish bus drivers and U.S. public employees.

The April U.C. Extension conference will feature Bernard Posner, Executive Director, President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, as keynote speaker. Also participating will be Dr. Melvin Lipsett, Director of WERC; Ruth Ormsby of WERC;

Philip Draper, Director, Center for Independent Living in Berkeley; and Robert Laws, Judge, Workers' Compensation Appeals Board.

The Conference will examine factors that affect the direction and pace of rehabilitation of newly disabled people, including psychological, legal, cultural, and legislative aspects. The objective is to provide perspective that will help participants develop more individualized and responsive intervention plans and to improve services to those who have disabilities.

For more information about the conference, call Jacqueline Hutchins at (415) 642-1061; for more information about the WERC seminar series, call Ruth Ormsby at (415) 843-5686.



NIOSH Evaluation

DNT, TDA May Lower Sperm Counts

A NIOSH Health Hazard Evaluation requested by employees at Olin Chemical Company's plant in Brandenburg, Kentucky, has discovered possible reproductive problems which may be connected to chemicals used there.

A small test group at the plant, exposed to dinitrotoluene (DNT) and toluene diamine (TDA), showed reduced sperm counts, and wives of the men were found to have a higher than normal miscarriage rate. NIOSH's report cautions that the findings are not completely conclusive, but also says that they cannot be dismissed as insignificant.

The Olin plant, 25 miles southwest of Louisville, employs about 600 people in the manufacture of 170 organic chemicals. DNT is used to make dyes, and its derivative TDA is used in manufacture of urethane foam for cushions. Employees in the plant's TDA area are exposed to both chemicals during loading and unloading procedures, as well as in the air from leaks.

The NIOSH study, conducted from mid-1979 to early 1980, compared nine men who currently staff the TDA area over four shifts to a control group elsewhere in the plant, and to another group with past TDA exposures but none in the last two years. A total of 30 men ranging in age from 28 to 49 were studied. Average Olin employment for the group was 14.5 years.

During the entire investigation, measured levels of DNT were well below the current federal OSHA standard of 1.5 milligrams per cubic meter of air. No TDA standard now exists, but federal OSHA recommends that levels be kept as low as possible since TDA is a suspected carcinogen. Various recent studies have found that DNT can cause headaches, irritability, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, susceptibility to anemia, liver damage, and possibly cancer. TDA is still being studied, but its effects are thought to be similar.

Of the nine workers in the TDA area,

only one has had a healthy child conceived since working in the area; there was a total of 10 miscarriages among the wives. Two of the couples reported growth abnormalities and mental retardation in their sons. Semen abnormalities were found in four of the men, and the group as a whole suffered from hypertension, skin rashes, and lipid irregularities.

Sperm count reduction was noted both among employees with considerable time in the TDA unit, and among employees relatively new there.

Olin is now implementing several recommendations made by NIOSH, including special clothing, respirators, and a medical followup program for all exposed employees. NIOSH will conduct similar studies in other DNT and TDA plants, and has also asked for animal research on the reproductive effects of these chemicals.

—BNA Occupational Safety and Health Reporter

No Excess Cancer Rate at Portsmouth

A NIOSH study has failed to substantiate earlier reports of excess cancer death rates among workers exposed to low level radiation at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine.

A 1978 study by two physicians, Dr. Thomas Najarian and Dr. Theodore Colton, of shipyard workers exposed to radiation found a cancer death rate twice the national average and a leukemia death rate five times the national average. But this study was based on death certificates and interviews with workers' families because employment and radiation exposure records were not available to the physicians.

The NIOSH study included 25,000 past and present civilian employees at the shipyard, of whom 7,615 had radiation exposure averaging a cumulative 2.779 rems in a lifetime. (Americans

receive an average of 0.1 rem annually from natural background radiation.) Although some of the workers had a cumulative lifetime exposure of up to 91 rems, records showed that none of the workers received more than the federal occupational radiation exposure limit of 5 rems per year.

Although the new study did not find any excess deaths from cancer overall, nor from leukemia specifically, Dr. Anthony Robbins, NIOSH director, cautioned that these findings should not lessen concern about the possible health risks of long-term exposure to low level radiation. Robbins explained that the number of workers involved was too small, and the time which has passed since exposure too short, to draw any conclusions about safe levels of radiation exposure.

Strike Over Hormone Exposure in Mexico

Union workers at the Syntex chemical plant in Cuernavaca, Mexico, have been on strike since October. One of the demands of the strikers is for special protection for male workers in an area of the plant that manufactures female hormones used in birth control pills. About three dozen male workers in the section have breasts that have become unnaturally enlarged.

Union leader Salvador Buenrostro said the men need more protection on the job, and that the affected men should receive psychological treatment or surgery. He said that a survey of women who work in the hormone section showed they had not been affected.

—Cal/OSHA Reporter

Fenton Will Head Workers' Comp Board

On January 7, 1981, Governor Brown appointed former state Assemblyman Jack Fenton, 64, chairman of the California Workers' Compensation Appeals Board. Fenton replaces Melvin S. Witt of Berkeley, who resigned.

Fenton was defeated in last June's Democratic primary in his district.

Brown also appointed Barbara Anne Sharon of Arcadia to the Appeals Board, and reappointed Gordon R. Gaines of Berkeley. Sharon, 37, a Workers' Compensation judge, replaces Mervin Glow of Long Beach, who resigned. Gaines, 50, has been on the Board since 1975.

Board members serve four-year terms and are subject to confirmation by the state Senate.

Cal/OSHA Mine Safety

Currently 90 underground mines are being worked in California. The soaring price of gold has resulted in new mines being opened and old mines being reopened.

According to Art Carter, Cal/OSHA Chief, there is increased potential for mine or mine-related accidents unless workers, owners, and the public know about the hazards posed by working in mines and entering abandoned mines, and the safety precautions required by State law.

The California Division of Mines and Geology is currently inspecting abandoned mines throughout the state to assess their remaining mineral wealth. Cal/OSHA presented Division personnel a mine safety training course in December, 1980. The course has also been given to city and county sheriff, police, and fire emergency rescue personnel.

Carter emphasized the need for training emergency personnel because "the potential hazards to rescuers are every bit as great as they are for the adventuring, curious, and untrained public."

Working mines are considered places of employment and consequently are covered by Cal/OSHA regulations.

BLUE COLLAR STRESS

Continued from p. 3

Alma: Normally the kids are really good. They pick up after themselves. Sometimes I get into it with the kids.

Joanne: What about housework?

Alma: Mike and the girls help a lot, but I guess I'm the one that really keeps it going!

Joanne: What about child care?

Alma: We're in the car by 7 AM every day. I have a good babysitter now, but before I've had some crummy ones. One made the kids wait on her. Another one wouldn't take Jackie to the hospital when her nose was almost broken. I pay \$70 a week for the two kids now. The kids are used to it, but they cried a lot at first.

Joanne: What do you want your girls to be when they grow up?

Alma: I want them to go to college, because I didn't. Jackie talks about being a crane operator, like me. I ask her if that's something she'd want to do her whole life. I can't possibly see myself retiring out of a shipyard. I'd rather get into union work. I want to learn. Maybe some labor law and contracts.

Joanne: Why union work?

Alma: I see the old guys in the yard; they're out to lunch. They've been cracked on the head five or six times. Got fingers sewed back on. They're physically in bad shape. They look a lot older than their age.

With the union, I'll still be going in and out of the shipyard, meeting members, dealing with the conditions that exist. I could benefit them a lot more in the union than what I'm doing now.

Joanne: I hear you've been made shop steward. That's good news!

Alma: I'm not so sure just yet. Every steward before me has either been fired or quit.

Joanne: Do you get respect from management?

Alma: You're another piece of equipment they're paying for. The company never says you've done a good job. They make lists of the bad things you

do, but never of the good things. If you get hurt on the job, they say you're lying! One man, who had worked there for 20 years, got a hernia on the job. They claimed it happened at home. But the guy would never even file a claim!

Joanne: Do co-workers usually support each other?

Alma: Oh, yeah! One guy was pulling a chain-fall. It snapped, and hit him right in the head. Knocked him out. He got 24 stitches in his head and was laid up in the hospital. Some of the guys were visiting him in the hospital when the foreman called up demanding information for his damn report. He didn't even say, "How are you?" One of the guys, who answered the phone, swore at the foreman and hung up on him.

Bethlehem is so big, I don't even know who owns it. Some of the smaller companies probably treat their workers better. They're family-owned.

When friends from the yard get together, we talk about work a lot. Management doesn't understand us, or why we hang around each other. They think we're low life. We're funky.

Joanne: Have you ever been sexually harassed on the job, by your co-workers or the foreman?

Alma: Being a woman's not that much of a problem, because most of the guys know Mike. When some of the guys harassed me at first, I'd pull out my wrench and threaten them with it. They didn't bother me any more after that.

Joanne: So how do you feel about this job? Stressed out, or pretty good about it?

Alma: You have to be an engineer. You gotta engage your mind before you engage any levers. I feel I earn my money at the end of the day. I'm stressed out by the stuff I told you about, but in general it feels pretty good. It's OK.

Joanne: Could you do without the Supes?

Alma: The Supes have too much power. They feel they have to keep us down for us to work, like they can't be friendly or people won't work. I wouldn't pressure people like they do. I know people will work if they like you.

Refinery, Petrochemical Industry Health and Safety

Beginning February 9, 1981, the Labor Occupational Health Program organized and conducted a week-long training session on health and safety hazards in the petroleum refining and petrochemical industries. Required by contracts between the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union (OCAW) and a number of companies in these industries in California, the course was attended by 18 employer representatives and 21 employee representatives.

Health and safety committee members, supervisors, and health and safety staff attended from Standard Oil of California refineries in Richmond and El Segundo; Chevron Chemical in Richmond; Tosco Corporation; and Occidental Chemical Company.

While the major emphasis of the program was on the recognition, evaluation, and control of health hazards, participants also attended sessions on recognition and control of safety hazards, accident investigation, and fire prevention and protection. A lively debate on the use of fire brigades marked the session on fire prevention.

Sessions on health hazards covered health standards and concepts of toxicology as well as industrial hygiene principles, practice, and control methods.



LOHP's Janet Bertinuson (left) assists conference participants in calibrating a sampling pump. (Photo: LOHP.)



(Photo: LOHP.)

Dr. Donald Whorton conducted the session on definitions and limitations of health standards, and then led participants on a tour through the human body with discussion of how the body protects itself against workplace hazards, and how these same hazards can break down the body's defenses. Dr. Whorton also discussed the major target organs.

The second day wound up with workshops on hazards specific to the two industries and on methods for recognizing hazards. Janet Bertinuson of LOHP and Jeffrey Hahn of the state Hazard Evaluation System and Information Service (HESIS) (within the California Department of Health) conducted the hazard recognition workshops.

Later, during a day-long session on workplace monitoring, Bertinuson and Hahn discussed aspects of workplace monitoring, including the form that chemicals may take in the workplace environment, developing a sampling strategy, and techniques for workplace monitoring. A discussion of instruments used for sampling a variety of hazards (for example, dust, gases, noise, and heat) was followed by an afternoon in the laboratory. During the laboratory session participants learned how to calibrate sampling pumps and use direct-reading instruments such as carbon monoxide meters and detector

tubes. They also took ventilation measurements which clearly demonstrated the necessity of good design for ventilation systems.

A session on control of hazards dealt with several methods such as substitution, ventilation systems, isolation, and administrative controls. Participants considered examples from their own workplaces. These discussions were followed by a presentation on personal protective equipment with an emphasis on respirators, including: importance of fit testing and use of the correct respirator for the job; requirements for a respiratory protection program; and problems with use of such methods for control of exposure to health hazards.

A presentation on medical surveillance finished out the fourth day. Dr. Gideon Letz from HESIS discussed types of medical tests, what they are designed to show, and when they should be taken. Following a discussion of lung function tests, Barbara Koopman and Bob Cooper of Environmental Health Associates demonstrated the use of a spirometer for testing lung function, and class members were able to take the test throughout the afternoon.

The final class session focused on rights and responsibilities under the California OSHA law and provided an opportunity for participants to ask final questions.

—Janet Bertinuson

Around LOHP. . .

LOHP Resources Conference April 13-15

From Monday, April 13 to Wednesday, April 15, 1981, the Labor Occupational Health Program will sponsor its first Conference on Health and Safety Resources at the Bellevue Hotel, Geary and Taylor Sts., in San Francisco.

The conference is designed to provide participants with the latest information on use of audiovisual and written materials in occupational health and safety training. Workshops will be offered on developing newsletters; researching and producing fact sheets, pamphlets, and books; filmmaking and using films; slide-tape and video development; working with the media; library development and networking; and effective use of audiovisual materials. Included on the program will be screenings of

films, slide shows, and videotapes. There will be demonstrations of the latest in audiovisual equipment, as well as a review of new books, packets, curricula, pamphlets, and fact sheets.

Workshop leaders and resource persons will be media workers, union newspaper editors, filmmakers, and occupational health specialists.

Registration fee is \$50 (advance payment.) Make checks payable to "The Regents of U.C.", and mail with name, organization, address, and telephone number to: Resources Conference, LOHP, Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California, 2521 Channing Way, Berkeley, CA 94720. Please register as soon as possible; if the conference is oversubscribed and it

becomes necessary to limit enrollment, your check will be returned.

Each conference attendee is responsible for making his or her own hotel arrangements. LOHP has arranged for blocks of rooms at both the Bellevue and the nearby Hotel Californian; please contact the hotels directly and indicate that you will be attending the LOHP Resources Conference.

A limited number of booths will be available at the conference to display equipment and/or materials. For details on booth reservation, or for more information about the conference itself, please contact Kate Caldwell or Ken Light at the above LOHP address, or phone: (415) 642-5507.

LOHP Films

"OSHA" Now Available

LOHP Films is now distributing a new federal OSHA film, "OSHA." The documentary is an introduction to the agency and its efforts to help protect the American workforce. Workers and representatives of labor, business, and government discuss real safety and health problems and their solutions.

The 16 mm. film is about 30 minutes in length. While purchase details have not yet been arranged, it is available for immediate rental from: LOHP Films, Transit Media, P.O. Box 315, Franklin Lakes, N.J. 07417. Phone (201) 891-8240. Rental is \$30.

Morris Davis Resigns LOHP Director Post

Morris Davis, Labor Occupational Health Program Executive Director since 1977 and an LOHP staff member since 1974, resigned effective November 17, 1980. He assumed a new position on that date as a Presiding Official with the Federal Region IX Merit System Protection Board. In his new capacity, he serves as a hearing officer for grievances of federal employees.

Janet Bertinuson is currently Acting Director of LOHP.

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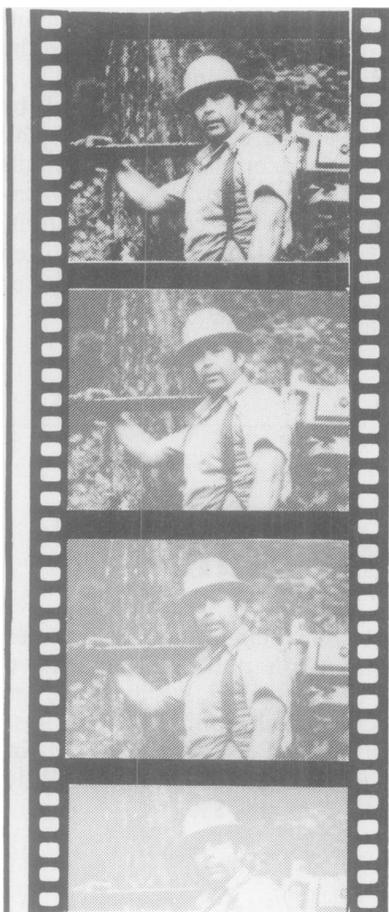
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New LOHP Film

Another Day's Living

LOHP's new film, *Another Day's Living*, is now available for sale or rental. Filmed on location in the forests and sawmills of Washington and British Columbia, the film details the hazards of the forest products industry (logging, sawmills, and plywood mills.) Featuring songs by Johnny Cash and Mel Tillis, the film is a co-production of LOHP, the International Woodworkers of America, and filmmaker Charles West. The 16mm. color film runs 30 minutes; sale price is \$350. and rental is \$50. Sales orders should be addressed to: LOHP Films, 2521 Channing Way, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720, or telephone: (415) 642-5507. Rental orders should be addressed to: LOHP Films, Transit Media, P.O. Box 315, Franklin Lakes, N.J. 07417, or telephone: (201) 891-8240.



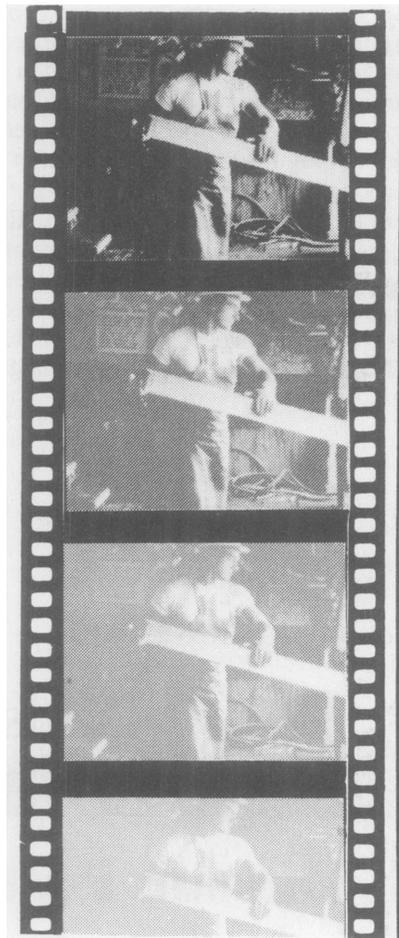
The hazards of life in the logging camps are just a bitter memory. Gone are the killer river drives and log jams that swept whole crews to their death.

But today's loggers and millworkers are still faced with hazards and even death. Chemical dust and noise envelop these workers, many of whom don't know or are indifferent to the health problems that have been linked to their jobs.

White Finger, contact with formaldehyde glues, and the loss of limbs and life are a reality that these workers face day after day.

Another Day's Living looks at the life of the woodworker both yesterday and today. Some of the history of the industry is told through song and the voices of old time woodworkers.

Another Day's Living is more than just a health and safety film. Its striking and often beautiful images, and its poignant interviews, make it a salute to the men and women of the wood products industry. It is a film that should be seen by union members, occupational and public health specialists, college and community groups, and people who are interested in problems that all workers face in dealing with the questions of health and safety in the work environment.



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