

Federal War On Waste From Accidents

Hopeful that Federal example will stimulate all groups—labor, management, educators, safety and professional organizations throughout the country—to increase their efforts to reduce accidents wherever they occur, the President of the United States has launched a drive to curb job deaths and injuries to employees of the Federal Government.

"Today we open another front in our War on Waste—waste of human resources, productive skills and money," President Johnson announced on February 16. He referred to Mission SAFETY-70, a frontal attack on the "inexcusable waste" and needless human suffering stemming from on-the-job injuries to Federal civilian employees. At the same time, the President directed the heads of executive departments and agencies to reduce Federal work injuries and costs, year by year, until a 30 percent reduction is achieved by 1970.

Simultaneously with the President's pronouncements and insistence on improved safety performance and efficiency in Federal operations, the U.S. Public Health Service announced that accidents in 1964 took the lives of 104,000 persons, injured 50 million others and cost the Nation upwards of \$15 billion. Accidents are the chief cause of death in Americans aged one through 34—and, among those 15-24, responsible for more deaths than all other causes combined, the agency warned.

The objective of the President's plan—to conserve skilled manpower, ma-

terials, and money—constitutes a managerial aim similar to that of many organizations in the private sector. Its success will require the active support of government administrators, supervisors and workers.

Today's work requirements in both private industry and Government demand an ever-increasing level of skill. Our national and private investment in training for, and acquiring, these skills makes it imperative to protect their impairment by work injuries. The Government must compete with private industry for employees in a wide range of occupations. Just as private industry wants its newer, younger, employees to have had some exposure to safety in school and to have developed consciousness of the importance of safe work habits, the Federal Government has a similar interest.

The fact that many individual companies and industries in the private sector have made substantial reductions in their injury frequency rates underscores the soundness of the President's request. In the 5-year period, 1958-62, for example, these industries made improvement: Explosive, 33.3 percent reduction in frequency rate; agricultural pesticides, 53.6 percent; telephone and telegraph apparatus, 31.6 percent; dental equipment and supplies, 36.5 percent; gas operations of combination companies, 35.4 percent. There were others, but these are a few examples. Numerous individual companies achieved exceedingly good reductions in frequency rates.

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