

REPORT OF DEPARTMENT OF TRAFFIC

C J TILDEN, *Chairman*
ORGANIZING FOR SAFETY

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SYNOPSIS

Organizing a state or a community for safety means bringing into systematic connection and cooperation the highway and traffic engineers, the police and courts, the schools and newspapers, the businesses and the civic groups—all as parts of a whole, to accomplish for the community what no one of them could do alone. The principles of such organization are the same as have worked successfully for 10 to 20 years in industrial safety and commercial vehicle safety work. Every one of the cities receiving a first award in the National Traffic Safety Contest last year had a live, effective, safety organization leading and correlating its campaign.

Through a financial grant from the automobile industry the National Safety Council has been enabled to re-establish a field department of eight competent men. Largely with their help, 28 states and 150 cities now have some kind of a safety organization. In several states, county organizations too have been started.

A year ago we presented an outline of what is known and what has been done, for highway safety.¹ We stated in conclusion that we already knew how to reduce accidents if we really want to, that our greatest need was to arouse to action the public officials and other leaders and all the people, that above all we needed a definitely organized safety program, backed by the best official and civic leadership, in every state and city.

Secondly, we said that we also needed further study of just how accidents occur, how various safety activities work, and especially studies of the individual driver and pedestrian, how he behaves and why.

It is tremendously encouraging to know that during the past year great progress has been made along both these lines. On the second item, research, you

¹ "Progress in Promoting Highway Safety" by Sidney J Williams, Proc Highway Research Board, Vol 15, p 294

are hearing from others how the patient pioneer work of psychologists like Lauer and DeSilva is at last receiving the support it deserves, and how the Bureau of Public Roads, receiving an appropriation for work in this field, has invoked the cooperation of this very Board in defining and executing a program of safety research.

But the topic today is the one first mentioned—the progress we have made in putting to use the tools, the knowledge and experience, that we already have.

What do we mean by organizing for safety? "Organization" is today a word that is often used, but seldom really understood. We can all see and appreciate a divided highway, a motorcycle officer, a safety poster on a billboard—but what is this intangible thing we call "organization?"

The dictionary says that to organize is to bring into systematic connection and

cooperation as parts of a whole. In biology the word has the special meaning "to endow with life." I like that definition, it fits what we are discussing today. When we organize a state or a community for safety, if we do it successfully, we do precisely that thing—we bring into systematic connection and cooperation the highway and traffic engineers, the police and courts, the schools and newspapers, the businesses and the civic groups—all as parts of a whole, and we endow that organization with life, so that it becomes something more than the sum of its constituent parts.

Organizing for safety is no new theory. In industry it is an old story. We have known for more than 20 years that it is difficult if not impossible to stop accidents permanently in a factory, a mine or a railroad without a definite safety organization—"bringing into systematic connection and cooperation" the various people in that industry who are concerned with the subject in one way or another, to function as parts of a whole whose aim is to see that nothing is left undone for Safety.

We have known for at least 10 years that these principles of safety organization apply equally in a fleet of trucks or other vehicles and we have had definite proof for at least five years that the same principles apply also to the community and to the state. It is no mere coincidence that every one of the cities receiving a first place award in our National Traffic Safety Contest last year had a live, effective safety organization leading and correlating its campaign.

Let me make perfectly clear that a safety organization is in no sense a substitute for the concrete, practical things which must be done to stop accidents. In the factory, gears must be guarded; workmen must be trained and disciplined. The plant safety committee is no substitute for those things—on the contrary, it is a means for making sure that those

things are done. In a city, a safety council or committee is no substitute for good traffic engineering, good enforcement, good school work, it is precisely the function of the safety body to see that these things are done, that improvements are made, that the proper administrative departments are created if they do not already exist, and that they are kept at a high level of efficiency year after year.

What progress have we made in establishing such organizations? Not long after our meeting here last year the automobile industry, through the Automobile Manufacturers Association, provided funds with which the National Safety Council re-established its Field Department. Since then our eight field men have visited every state in the Union. Twenty-eight states now have some kind of a state safety organization, most of them less than 2 years old. In most of the remaining states, the state officials and others are seriously interested in a similar program. About 150 cities, too, have organized safety groups, about half of these are called safety councils while the remainder are committees or departments of the local chamber of commerce, motor club, or other civic body. The latest addition to the family is some 200 county safety councils organized under the leadership of the states. We don't yet know just how effective these county bodies can be.

Let me repeat that all these organizations have but one purpose, one excuse for being—namely, to get done those specific things that need to be done, for the stopping of accidents. They get behind needed street and highway improvements and the recognition of the traffic engineering function as a part of state and city government. They get behind better enforcement and the establishment of traffic divisions and of accident investigation and accident prevention in police departments, as well as special traffic courts. They get behind a thorough-

going school safety program including the teaching of safe driving in the high schools

They usurp no official functions but serve to coordinate and stimulate more effective functioning of the official departments. They are an intimate connecting link between the officials and the citizens. They encourage, or themselves carry on, continuous education of the general public including the commercial drivers. They see that proper accident records are not only collected and used by the officials but also are published and interpreted to the public. They support needed legislation. They help industrial employers to carry the safe driving message to their workers. Sometimes they carry on industrial safety, home safety, and fire prevention work as well—for an all embracing state program is always more effective than a partial one, we cannot truly understand and respect safety in one compartment of our lives and ignore it in others.

To do these things a safety organization, be it statewide or limited to the smallest community, must have two essential qualities, cooperation and leadership. There is no room for either commercial or political self seeking—although the business man or the official who does a really good safety job will save himself money in the one case and get

votes in the other. Then there must be real leadership, which means not merely presiding at a meeting once a month but digging in day after day with energy, tact, and unselfish devotion.

Not all the safety organizations that have been started have these qualities. There are failures, as in any other human activity. Volunteer groups often become discouraged by official or public apathy. Men are lazy, plans go wrong. There must be constant stimulation of flagging interest, and wise advice, based on practical experience, on how to get over the rough places in the road. That is why we must have field men; that is why we always advise a state organization not to attempt to organize all its counties unless it can send its own field men to visit these counties frequently and keep them going. It takes men and money to do safety educational and promotional work, just as it takes men and money to build highways and to run police departments.

Safety organizations are the sales department of the safety movement. They do not take the place of research, or of engineering, or of police training, or of any other essential. They help to sell these things to the community and to keep them sold. They represent that working partnership between officials and the public which alone can bring lasting results.

DISCUSSION ON ORGANIZING FOR SAFETY

HON ROY H WILLIAMS, *Justice of the Ohio Supreme Court, President, Ohio Safety Council* The Ohio State Safety Council acknowledges that "safety organizations are but the sales departments of the safety movement" Safety can be sold to the general public, for people want to be safe, and will insist on securing the specific things needed to promote safety through expenditures of time and money, if the goods are only laid down on the counter through the safety movement Obviously selling an idea presents measurably the same problem as that which must be solved in a merchandising enterprise, when the members of the organization attempt to saturate a market for a definite product that is needed and that can be economically purchased but which until purchased is not in economic use

As the modern merchandising organization creates demand for the commodities to replace less up-to-date products and devices, so The Ohio State Safety Council spreads information concerning lack of safety in using our streets and highways In other words it sells "safety" to the public and makes it safety-minded and safety-conscious

In planning to organize and endow it with life as mentioned by Mr Sidney Williams, The Ohio State Safety Council is continually emphasizing the thought that they must plan things that are easy to do, likely to spread and calculated to arouse the attention and interest of the motorist, taxpayer and voter in safety facilities and to promote a desire and create a demand for good cars, good roads and good seeing and stimulate carefulness in driving Good roads, properly patrolled highways, good, mechanically efficient cars, good seeing resulting from corrected vision and properly lighted highways, and careful driving, make up the essence of the program of The Ohio State Safety Council

There are things to be done that are less spectacular but essential For instance, organization, enactment of constructive legislation, and education regarding safety, all require careful analyses of conditions and formation of plans, and constant, continued and systematic efforts to obtain objectives

The Ohio State Safety Council has been quietly working to improve auto accident conditions for seven years and has assisted in securing the enactment of three important pieces of legislation, The Driver's License Law, The Financial Responsibility Law and the Highway Patrol Law

The Council is making ready for the participation of the general public, but realizes that the mere passage of laws will not be enough Sporadic campaigns only turn down the accident curve temporarily and the enthusiasm of workers dies with the end of the campaign The only way to accomplish results is by a balanced safety program on a state wide scale in which all individuals and organizations must work all the time

After all merchandising and advertising are little more than a form of education Manufacturers and merchants display samples, make demonstrations, and advertise through the radio, magazine's, car-cards, signs and periodicals to make the products better known and more desired by the public

The same thing can be done with our product—safety We can make it known and desired by the motoring public With the thousands of supporters we should have, the expense of not having safety is to be charged to a profit from having obtained it Safety is even now being paid for though not attained

The Ohio State Safety Council has selected 48 sections of highway in Ohio which it proposes should be transformed into model highways, "safety show windows"

These sample highway sections will be the stores in which our product is to be displayed and sold. They will be marked with safety signs of an educational nature. They will give the motorist an opportunity to see and experience highway safety in practical operation and will breed the desire in his mind to have these practical facilities employed on all main or trunk highways.

It is difficult to conceive the highway of the future but we may assume that upon the great arteries of motor travel dangerous curves will be eliminated, every hazard marked with warning signals, the roadway widened and properly re-surfaced and equipped with proper lighting facilities. Motorists should be guarded not only against physical hazards, such as railroad crossings, intersections, and dangerous hills but also against mental hazards which ignorance of conditions and carelessness in thought and in action may bring about.

In all phases of the campaign the Ohio State Safety Council will employ methods that have been submitted to acid tests in various parts of the country. Its policies will be carried out by three divisions, research, public information and law enforcement. These policies will be determined by four important com-

mittees whose fields of work will embrace every phase of highway safety.

First is the committee on Roads, which will consider such matters as "clover leaves, grade crossing eliminations, road surface markings, and all other safety facilities which should be a part of highway construction or maintenance."

The committee on "Seeing" will cover highway lighting, defective vision of drivers, car lighting, road signs and traffic lights.

The committee on "Driving" will work on traffic regulations, safety education, driving habits and other problems affecting the driver.

The fourth committee will devote its attention to car-problems—such as the safe maintenance of cars, the use of safety accessories, inspection of vehicles and elimination of unsafe cars from the road.

The Ohio State Council feels that they have proven to their own satisfaction that the safety educational highway is the best means yet found for awakening the public's desire for the safety services of the highway designer and builder and the public's willingness to pay for the construction features of a highway designed for safety,—in brief, the best means yet found for advertising, demonstrating and selling "all around" safety on the highway.