

## LIGHT IN OUR DARKNESS

THE BIG SIX FILM UNIT HAVE PLEASURE IN PRESENTING

“LIGHT IN OUR DARKNESS”

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*Most workers are used to working in some discomfort or other, and they regard this as more or less normal. They, who make a living in a steel foundry, must work amidst heat, fumes, smokes, and dust. At the most modern and highly mechanised steel foundry in the British Empire, everything possible is done to keep all workers in the best of health.*

*In the midst of the foundry, other workshops and railway siding stands a medical department which provides first aid and other services much welcomed and appreciated by all employees. They come into the surgery with their injuries, with burns, and scalds, for the removal of foreign bodies in the skin and eyes, the treatment of damage to joints and fractured bones. And they also come for advice about their work and many other problems. All these services are cheerfully given with the result that there is an atmosphere of mutual confidence, happiness, and respect between the workers and the department.*

*Every applicant for a job in the foundry receives a thorough comprehensive examination by the work's medical officer. Thus, the worker can be certain that he will be placed in a job for which he is suitable and that he will not be put to work that is hazardous for him or which might cause serious damage to his health. When a disease is found in its early stages, the worker is put in the path of seeking professional advice from his own doctor, a chest clinic or a hospital. Thus, the illness is caught in its early stages and prevented from becoming serious. The medical examinations include taking the height, weight, and chest measurements, examinations of the eyes and ears, and testing the urine.*

*A full plate X-ray of the chest is taken and a frank discussion follows with the worker in front of the plate at the time the clinical examination is conducted.*

*Particular care is taken of the adolescent employee right from the day of engagement. A normal full examination is undertaken by the work's doctor.*

*Every boy is weighed and a progress chart kept which shows the gains in weight and height. Advice is given on hygiene and care of the teeth. Anaemias and other deficiencies are treated by supplying iron, vitamins, etc. Where necessary, milk is provided and other supplementary*

*foods arranged. Boys in their apprenticeship come regularly for their drink of milk which they greatly appreciate.*

*In the first aid department, there are large separate rooms for male and female employees where hundreds of dressings are applied daily. Workers are encouraged to come at once for prompt and skilled attention to even the most trivial injury, whether it'd be a cut, a scratch, a burn or more serious damage to the skin, eye or limbs. Apart from the first aid attention and subsequent follow-up dressings, treatment is available in the way of medicated arm- and foot baths.*

*X-ray photographs are taken in all orthopaedic problems including injuries to joints and bones. Where necessary, plaster cases are applied.*

*Physiotherapy which includes radiant heat, infrared rays, massage and exercises is applied for the treatment of sprains, joint injuries, fibrositis, and other rheumatic and industrial conditions. There are batteries of artificial sun-ray lamps in the department to help to increase resistance to winter colds.*

*After treatment, patients can rest and recover in favourable circumstances with warmth and quiet in the restroom, pending their return to the works or to their own homes. While waiting, blankets, electric pads, and hot water bottles are applied and sugared hot tea given to drink to combat shock.*

*In the relief of injury and the fight to keep the injured employee at work, treatment is given with the full resources of modern science. Sepsis has almost been abolished by the methods employed. Hours of work hitherto lost are being saved, and untold misery and disablement which formerly afflicted the workers is being prevented: the period of suffering and incapacity is greatly reduced by means of M&B drugs, penicillin, and the new anti-burn treatments applied early.*

*Attached to the medical department are modern washing facilities and baths which enable workers engaged in the dirtiest of jobs to go home to their families in a clean and pleasant state. The burly workers enjoy wallowing in the hot water and soapsuds. Sprays and showers are there for those who want them. The hygienic service that is provided is greatly appreciated.*

*In every engineering works there is some risk of injury to eyes from dust burns and foreign bodies. The specialised department of this steel foundry is therefore opened to and widely used by other works in the neighbourhood. The sister is trained specially in industrial medicine and also in eye-work. In spite of the provision of protective goggles, there are many injuries to the workers' eyes every year, all of which are preventable. Skilled first aid applied at the earliest moment to an eye injury prevents incapacity and the risk of blindness. The hazards of grinding machines and other foundry processes are considerably lessened by early attendance of the medical department.*

*Every week a chiropodist visits the work to give welcomed treatment to the tired feet of those who, by necessity, have to stand on hard concrete, in hot sand or in other discomforts. The service given by the chiropodist helps in maintaining the tone and general physical well-being of all the employees.*

*For the female workers there is a special restroom if they feel faint or are otherwise distressed, and the same general service is provided for them, as for the men.*

*Crane drivers have frequent eye examinations to ensure accurate function and vision for the safe delivery of heavy castings, crucibles of molten metal, and other large objects. The job requires absolute fitness, great skill, and accuracy with the minimum of risk to those working on the floor.*

*For the workers with special hazards, there are blood examinations through the hospital service, in particular for those who work in the x-ray department or who handle radium for gamma radiography.*

*Great attention is paid to teeth, especially of young workers. Advice is given whenever necessary. There is a fullish liaison with the local dentist and hospitals.*

*Whenever anything important is discovered on an X-ray plate, contact is made with the patient's own doctor and the information passed on to him. The local doctor is given a sight of the film and he always expresses his appreciation of this exceptional service.*

*All doctors welcome the help of the work's medical department in the direction of providing daily dressings and physiotherapy for their patients. The service is also appreciated by the local hospital outpatient departments since it helps to avoid overcrowded waiting rooms and long hours of waiting.*

*Every phase of the doctor's work, whether preventive or curative, creates confidence and respect in the employee. Records show that the absence rate from sickness and injury is small and is still falling. All the time, steady progress is being made in the prevention of injury, disability as well as disease, and no effort is spared in this direction.*

*In the foundry, many parts of the workers' anatomy require protection. For the feet, strong boots are provided with steel toecaps to prevent toes being crushed by the fall of heavy castings. For grinders, welders, and bobbers, eye shields or goggles are provided. Glaring into the furnaces or the strong light of welding causes risk of cataract and other serious eye conditions, and therefore smoke lenses and specially coloured glasses are provided to prevent these disabilities.*

*In foundries, there is always dust and risk of lung disease caused by prolonged inhalation of dust, and therefore at James Bridge steelworks these problems are attacked from every angle by both the management and the medical services. An improved system of ventilation and dust extraction is a great insurance against pneumoconiosis. In place of old-fashioned and dangerous dry processes, such as sandblasting, there are now wet processes as with the hydro blast. The enclosing of dangerous processes in chambers with efficient dust extraction has brought about cleaner work and cleaner air in the foundry. Individual protection from dust inhalation can be guaranteed if the worker will use the respirators provided. A very large number of the foundry workers are now using efficient respirators as a result of the work of the medical services. All respirators are cleaned and have their filters changed in a department set up for this special purpose. Each worker has two masks allotted to him. While one is receiving attention, the other, clean and efficient, in the worker's own named and numbered box is delivered to his workshop.*

*For some jobs out of the ordinary, protective clothing is provided. A man in the shock blast chamber is fully protected by covering to his legs, arms, and body, by gauntlet gloves for his hands, by a large helmet with eye-protection, and a remote supply of pure air into his helmet.*

*We have done much work to provide the best type of respirator and filter for use in the foundry industry. And models that give the maximum degree of protection with the minimum of discomfort are provided. The shaking out of a filter after an ordinary shift period shows the amount of dust that has been prevented from entering the workers' lungs.*

*Routine X-ray examinations of the chest are given to all employees at least once a year, but in the case of those exposed to special risks in the foundry, and those who have a lung disability present, the examinations take place more frequently. The X-rays enable the medical service*

*to assess and control the condition of the workers' lungs. When things are under control, there is no need for the doctor to worry, but when otherwise, precautions are taken at once. There is excellent liaison between the medical and welfare department which ensures a force of healthy work people, and happiness and contentment right through the whole organisation. The medical services and amenities provided for the employees at the James Bridge steelworks is a common sense recognition of the fact that the foundry industry has workers' health problem at heart. The forward policy in solving the problems has much to recommend it for realism and boldness.*

F.H. LLOYD & C<sup>o</sup>LTD STEELFOUNDRY

THE END

Transcript: Thibault Riegert