

\$11,100,000 a year, authorized by the state public utilities commission last July 6.

the record of the Republican administration a good one or is it not?

County May Require Physical Exams For New Workers; Launch Safety Program For Employees

In conjunction with the new safety program launched today by county supervisors, upon the suggestion of the state due to the high cost of workmen's compensation insurance, physical examinations of county employes may be required in the future.

Tuesday morning, supervisors met with Elliot Freeman, supervising safety engineer of the state compensation insurance fund, to learn they were paying \$1.07 for each dollar's worth of insurance, due to the accident record of the county.

Freeman pointed out that other counties and municipalities are paying as low as 50, 60, 70 and 80 cents on each dollar's worth of insurance.

Figures showed that the county has set up \$22,000 in its budget for the current fiscal year for workmen's compensation. Cities like Santa Cruz and Salinas pay about the same amount, on a pro-rata basis, and receive about a 50 per cent refund annually.

Santa Cruz county, on the other hand, usually ends up in the red, and in addition has to make up an additional premium which is caused by the volume of claims the fund has to pay out to insured members.

As an example, there are currently two heart victims who have been paid more than \$5000 each, and it is not known how long such payments for the two will continue. Such examples affect the tax rate.

After learning the startling facts, supervisors agreed to go along with Freeman's three-point program which is as follows:

1. Appoint a member of the board of supervisors as chairman of the safety group program, to lend prestige to the plan and also act as a hammer on uncooperative employes;

2. Summon all department heads whose records show the preponderance of accidents, to become a part of the safety committee, and

3. Designate Freeman to work with the county in seeking out poor safety procedures and correct them.

Supervisors appointed Supervisor C. B. Harts as chairman of the board, summoned Road Commissioner Fred Pracht, Dr. Harvey E. Robins, hospital administrator, and Ed Christensen, county purchasing agent, to the meeting, and appointed H. L. Jackson, county personnel officer, as secretary of the committee.

They agreed also to begin a tour this morning with Freeman to inspect the crews in the county's five road districts, as to work habits.

Accompanying Freeman were Harts and Pracht.

It was agreed that probably the departments with the highest accident rate are the road department, county hospital, welfare and assessor's offices, the latter two because of the number of cars involved.

It was finally decided to allow Freeman and Harts to decide which department heads should make up the members of the safety committee.

A similar group was organized three or four years ago, Freeman told the board, and three or four persons showed up for the first meeting. At that time there was no supervisor as chairman.

Another phase of the problem discussed yesterday was the possibility, and a strong one, that future employes of the county would be required to undergo physical examinations to determine if they were capable of performing the jobs for which they were applying.

"People have been hired who never should have been hired in the first place," Freeman told the supervisors.

"I think every county employe should have a physical examination before being hired," Supervisor Frank Clement said. Other board members agreed.

Dr. Harvey Robins, county hospital administrator, indicated he would give the examinations free of charge at the hospital.

This would point up the weak hearts and bad backs, Freeman agreed, along with other physical disabilities.