

# How to Treat Habitual Absenteeism

**"H**OW TO make your presence felt without being physically there," says an AT&T ad about teleconferencing.

That's a good trick, if it can be done. Long before telecommunications politicians, bosses, parents, and absentee workers were trying to make it seem like they were on hand even if they weren't.

Congressmen have a neat way of making themselves appear to be present while absent. Only a few might be present on the floor considering legislation but others are counted present if they are in their offices or otherwise within "hollering distance." Thus they show good attendance records to the voters.

Legislators aren't quite so polished in this respect but if they succeed in emulating Congress with year-round lawmaking they might also learn how to cover up absenteeism.

Voters either don't notice or don't care about some of their representatives in government. Certain dis-

tricts keep on re-electing delegates with disgracefully poor attendance.

Elected and appointed officials aren't always in evidence at their jobs, either.

Last summer, the Bethany city council ousted one of its members who failed to attend 50 per cent of meetings held within four months, as provided by the city charter.

Irregular attendance has been identified as a major cause of failure by high school students and the large number of drop-outs of students who can't or won't keep up.

The same habits carry over into the business world. Those who made a practice of cutting classes may turn out to be the ones who fail to show up on Friday or Monday during the fishing season or who come in late after celebrating a holiday.

Workers have a right to expect their employers to have checks ready for them on pay day. And employers have a right to expect employees to show up for work, on time, without hangovers, and with

proper attitudes for doing their jobs.

Workers have an inherent responsibility for maintaining good health. Generally, employers are willing to do all they can to help keep their employees healthy.

It is reported that U.S. businesses spend more each year on health insurance premiums for their employees, retirees, and dependents than the same corporations pay their stockholders in dividends.

If they think about it, absentee employees probably expect their companies to keep on running and making enough money to meet the pay roll, whether they "make their presence felt" or not.

Few, if any, employees are irreplaceable. Those who are habitually tardy or absent might even be non-essential. It is a rule of good management that whoever may be dispensable should be terminated.

That should apply to public employees, as well as those in private enterprise.