divert the funds to his own use or benefit. Although contributions made to a trustee or third person pursuant to a benefit plan must be irrevocably made, this does not prevent return to the contractor or subcontractor of sums which he had paid in excess of the contributions actually called for by the plan, as where such excess payments result from error or from the necessity of making payments to cover the estimated cost of contributions at a time when the exact amount of the necessary contributions under the plan is not yet ascertained. For example, a benefit plan may provide for definite insurance benefits for employees in the event of the happening of a specified contingency such as death, sickness, accident, etc., and may provide that the cost of such definite benefits, either in full or any balance in excess of specified employee contributions, will be borne by the contractor or subcontractor. In such a case the return by the insurance company to the contractor or subcontractor of sums paid by him in excess of the amount required to provide the benefits which, under the plan, are to be provided through contributions by the contractor or subcontractor, will not be deemed a recapture or diversion by the employer of contributions made pursuant to the plan. (See Report of the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, S. Rep. No. 963, 88th Cong., 2d Sess., p. 5.)

§ 5.27 "* * * fund, plan, or program".

The contributions for fringe benefits must be made pursuant to a fund, plan or program (sec. 1(b)(2)(A) of the act). The phrase ''fund, plan, or program'' is merely intended to recognize the various types of arrangements commonly used to provide fringe benefits through employer contributions. The phrase is identical with language contained in section 3(1) of the Welfare and Pension Plans Disclosure Act. In interpreting this phrase, the Secretary will be guided by the experience of the Department in administering the latter statute. (See Report of Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, S. Rep. No. 963, 88th Cong., 2d Sess., p. 5.)

§ 5.28 Unfunded plans.

(a) The costs to a contractor or subcontractor which may be reasonably anticipated in providing benefits of the types described in the act pursuant to an enforceable commitment to carry out a financially responsible plan or program, are considered fringe benefits within the meaning of the act (see 1(b)(2)(B) of the act). The legislative history suggests that these provisions were intended to permit the consideration of fringe benefits meeting, among others, these requirements and which are provided from the general assets of a contractor or subcontractor. (Report of the House Committee on Education and Labor, H. Rep. No. 308, 88th Cong., 1st Sess., p. 4.)

(b) No type of fringe benefit is eligible for consideration as a so-called unfunded plan unless:

(1) It could be reasonably anticipated to provide benefits described in the act;

(2) It represents a commitment that can be legally enforced;

(3) It is carried out under a financially responsible plan or program; and

(4) The plan or program providing the benefits has been communicated in writing to the laborers and mechanics affected. (See S. Rep. No. 963, p. 6.)

(c) It is in this manner that the act provides for the consideration of unfunded plans or programs in finding prevailing wages and in ascertaining compliance with the Act. At the same time, however, there is protection against the use of this provision as a means of avoiding the act's requirements. The words ''reasonably anticipated'' are intended to require that any unfunded plan or program be able to withstand a test which can perhaps be best described as one of actuarial soundness. Moreover, as in the case of other fringe benefits payable under the act, an unfunded plan or program must be ''bona fide'' and not a mere simulation or sham for avoiding compliance with the act. (See S. Rep. No. 963, p. 6.) The legislative history suggests that in order to insure against the possibility that these provisions might be used to avoid compliance with the act, the committee contemplates that the Secretary of Labor in carrying out his responsibilities under Reorganization