PLAINTIFF'S
EXHIBIT
BRK-238

DIVISION OF SAFETY AND HYGIENE
NOVEMBER 3, 1950

R. W. Horse, Chairman
Industrial Commission of Ohio
Columbus 15, Ohio

To Re: Marine Products Division
General Motors Corporation
Dayton, Ohio

On November 2, 1950 in compliance with your request, a visit was made to the above named plant to investigate some cases of dermatitis reported among the employees.

On the date of investigation Wayne Taylor, Personnel Director; Russel Fox, Safety Director and Doctor H. E. Loyde, Plant Physician, were interviewed. At the conference the dermatitis situation was discussed including the number of cases, the departments in which they developed, measures for prevention and results accomplished.

A previous investigation was made at this plant on April 20, 1950 at which time a new oil filter and sterilizer had just been put in operation in Department #5. Since that time there have only been two or three new cases of dermatitis in that department. Several men who, having had dermatitis and apparently recovered, attempted to come back to the department but when symptoms again recurred, they were transferred to other departments.

Recently the new cases which had developed seemed to have been in Department #7, known as the wheel cylinder assembly department in which wheel cylinders are assembled and tested. This operation required the use of a special solution composed of diacetone alcohol to which about ten per cent (10%) castor oil is added. It is believed that many of the cases of dermatitis that have occurred are due to the defatting action of this solution removing the natural oil from the skin, resulting in irritation and possible infection.

The addition of the castor oil reduces this defatting action and has proved beneficial. It is possible, however, that some employees are sensitive to castor oil, especially oil that might contain some impurities. Some individuals were found to be allergic to the rubber gloves which they sometimes wear, or to the rubber cups which are used in the assembly of the cylinders.

We were informed that attempts had been made to modify or replace this solution but sofar as is known, no other chemicals or compounds can be substituted and produce satisfactory results.

It was also stated that other plants used the same solution for similar operations.

46

the employees in Department #7 who show evidences of sensitivity are transferred to other departments.

Department #19, known as brake shoe assembly, uses neither oil nor any solution. It is known as a "dry" operation and there have been no cases of dermatitis in this department excepting those persons who have been transferred to this department as a preventive or curative measure. One such case was found at the time of our visit and he had been transferred from Department #7 and still showed some evidences of oil dermatitis on his wrists and forearms. He also showed numerous boils following in which there still remained accumulations of oil and dirt from his previous occupation.

Doctor Leyda said that he is using special treatment and antiseptic solutions to overcome this condition.

It seems evident that lack of care and cleanliness of the skin on the part of the employees is a factor in the development of dermatitis in most of these departments. Adequate washing facilities are available in all departments. These wash rooms are well equipped and are kept in good condition.

Management has been experimenting with various types of soap in an effort to secure preparations which will properly cleanse the skin without producing irritation. In several of the wash rooms a new type of liquid soap has been installed which seems to be quite satisfactory. This soap was demonstrated and was found to be very efficient and still does not produce roughness or irritation of the skin.

It is evident, therefore, that Department #7 in which about two hundred and fifty (250) persons are employed is the one in which dermatitis is most apt to occur. Since it has been found impossible to change the solution used, except perhaps to modify the proportions of the materials used (and this is being done), the elimination of dermatitis will depend upon the cooperation of the employees in maintaining cleanliness, together with the use of protective personal equipment, with which they are supplied.

Doctor Leyda, the Plant Physician, has had much experience in the treatment of dermatitis and the cases which have occurred have evidently been well supervised for there has been no disability in any case. A few sensitized individuals have had to be transferred but this is for their benefit and welfare. Patch tests have been freely used on person and on controls in an effort to definitely determine the cause of the dermatitis.