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RE Editorial on "Silicosis, Asbestos and Cancer of the lung"



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NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ALLERGY AND INFECTIOUS DISEASES
NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE
NATIONAL CENTER OF NERVOUS DISORDERS
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NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF NEUROLOGICAL DISORDERS
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF NEUROLOGICAL DISORDERS AND BLINDNESS
THE CLINICAL CENTER
BUREAU OF PREVENTION

August 24, 1955

PERSONAL

Dr. William E. Smith
New York University
Post-Graduate Medical
School
477 First Avenue
New York 16, New York

Dear Dr. Smith:

I have your comments on my Editorial on "Silicosis, Asbestosis and Cancer of the Lung" and your inquiry concerning my more recent activities in field studies on occupational cancer problems.

The Canadian case referred to in the Editorial applies to the claims made by the widow of a Mr. Maurice Labbé, 805, St. Catherine Street, Trois-Rivières, Quebec, Canada. The legal procedures in regard to this case which were negotiated before the Workmen's Compensation Commission of Quebec took place during the last few months of 1951 and the first few months of 1952. The Special Legal Advisor to the Minister of Labour of Quebec was Mr. Louis F. Cantin, 225, Grande-Allée, Quebec, P. Q., Canada.

My activities in field work on environmental cancer were discontinued during the latter part of the summer of 1951 when I was requested to stop such activities and have no further contacts with industry or state health departments in matters of environmental and occupational cancer. This event was brought about by a complaint, as I was officially told, about my activities in regard to studying conditions bringing about lung cancers among workers employed in the chromate industry, made to my superiors in Washington in behalf and in the interest of the American chromate industry by Dr. Lanza, as its medical representative. Dr. Lanza apparently acted in the role of a lobbyist because in a telephone conversation on July 25, 1951, I had in regard to this matter with Mr. O. F. Tarr, Vice President, Mutual Chemical Company, I was told Dr. Lanza had taken this step in behalf of the American chromate industry.

The immediate reason for this complaint was provided by a copy of a manuscript prepared by Dr. Mancuso and myself on observations made in Ohio on cancer and health hazards among chromate manufacturers which I had given

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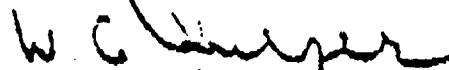
Dr. William E. Smith
August 24, 1955

before its publication in Industrial Medicine and Surgery to Mr. Tarr, who had forwarded this copy to Dr. Lanza. As a result of this event, it was strongly suggested to me to take my name off these manuscripts and it is for this reason that my name is lacking on the second paper dealing with the joint investigations on health hazards among chromate manufacturers conducted by Dr. Mancuso and myself (Occupational Cancer and Other Health Hazards in a Chromate Plant: A Medical Appraisal. II. Clinical and Toxicologic Aspects. Ind. Med. & Surg. 20:393-407, (September), 1951.)

Due to these annoying activities of Dr. Lanza, not only my field studies have come to an end since 1951 but there was for some time serious interference even with my experimental work in the field of occupational cancer because I was not able to continue for some time my cooperative work with the Mutual Chemical Company on blood reactions in chromate manufacturers. It was only after a rather long delay that I finally succeeded in reactivating this problem.

I can say that during the lifetime of Mr. Tarr, I had enjoyed the most harmonious, cooperative relations between the Mutual Chemical Company and the Carcinogenic Studies Section - as my section was called at that time. It is my belief, however, that through the intervention of Dr. Lanza, not only the interest of American industries with common sense to workers employed in these industries, but of the American people at large, and of the American medical profession, was seriously damaged.

Sincerely yours,



W. C. Hesper, M. D., Chief
Environmental Cancer Section
National Cancer Institute