

FILE NAME: Saranac (SAR)

DATE: 1944 July

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DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: Letters Between Vandiver Brown & Dr. Gardner
RE Report of Asbestosis 'Hazard' at the Canadian Mine

THE SARANAC LABORATORY
FOR THE STUDY OF TUBERCULOSIS
OF THE EDWARD L. TRUDEAU FOUNDATION
SARANAC LAKE, N.Y.

July 16, 1944



Mr. Vandiver Brown
Johns-Manville Corporation
22 East 40th Street
New York, New York

NOTED
V.B.

Dear Mr. Brown:

I am happy to inform you that we have just returned from a most interesting trip to Asbestos, Quebec. I took with me our roentgenologist, Dr. Robert, also Dr. Vestal of the North Carolina State Industrial Commission as he has had a lot of experience in this field and has seen a great deal of real asbestosis. In company with Dr. Stevenson we reviewed and read between two and three hundred of the X-ray films in his files. We found only two cases out of the lot which could be diagnosed as questionable first degree asbestosis. I was greatly relieved to discover that the two experts did corroborate me on previous observations that asbestosis was a rarity in the Asbestos-Thetford area.

^{still} We are at a loss to explain the situation because of the conditions in the textile mill which certainly should be capable of causing characteristic disease in exposed workmen. The only difference that we can see between this mill and that in similar plants in the U.S. is the absence of African fibre. However, I doubt whether this is the significant factor.

Mr. Fahnel, of the Metropolitan, writes me that he is planning to go to Asbestos for another survey in August. He will collect air-borne samples of dust; one half of each will be sent to this laboratory and he will retain the other one half for analysis. We hope that by making such a study in Quebec and comparing it with similar samples at Manville that we may arrive at some conclusion.

While we were up there it seemed highly desirable if I were to report our experimentation with asbestosis I should make mention of the clinical and X-ray experience on the North American Continent. In order to do this in an authoritative manner I should have the collaboration of the clinicians and roentgenologists. I proposed to Drs. Vestal and Robert that they join me in the venture. They would be very glad to do so and I think we might produce something that would be definitely worth while. It was agreed that it might be desirable to have our Dr. Robert review all the films that have been taken at Thetford. Dr. Stevenson felt that this could be done and would be very glad to have them sent down to us. This would give us a basis for statistical analysis and information on the incidence of various X-ray abnormalities.

Handover Brown

July 15, 1944

Before attempting the publication, of course, we must have the further information which Mr. Fehnel's counts may supply and we must examine more films from the American textile plants. I trust that this proposal may meet with your approval.

Very truly yours,



Leroy U. Gardner, M. D.
Director

LUG:RM

cc to Mr. H. J. Sherry

July 18, 1944

Dr. Leroy U. Gardner
The Saranac Laboratory
Saranac Lake, N. Y.

Dear Dr. Gardner:

Many thanks for yours of July 15 and the interesting report it contained concerning the asbestosis hazard -- or absence thereof -- at our Canadian mine. I imagine these findings are the type that represent a challenge to the scientific mind and I seem to sense between the lines of your letter a bloodhoundlike eagerness to be on the trail. More power to you!

Although further delay will necessarily result from your proposal that your report on the asbestos experiments include a discussion of the clinical and X-ray experience on the North American continent and a study of Mr. Fehnel's dust analyses, I cannot help feeling the additional material will be worth it. I shall therefore provide the various asbestos textile manufacturers with copies of your letter and explain that the enlarged program will result in a further postponement of the date upon which we may expect your final report.

Sincerely yours,

Vandiver Brown
Secretary

VB:8

July 18, 1944

S. A. Williams
A. R. Fisher
J. P. Woodard
F. G. Lippert

*Act. Trust
8 x 100 ft*

Attached is a copy of a letter
of July 15 from Dr. Gardner which reports
upon some various interesting developments
with respect to the asbestosis "hazard"
at the Canadian mine.

Vandiver Brown

VB:8
Enc.

July 19, 1944

Dr. Leroy J. Gardner
The Saranac Laboratory
Saranac Lake, N. Y.

Dear Dr. Gardner:

Referring further to your letter of July 15 and to the last paragraph in which you state that you considered it desirable to have your Dr. Robert review all the films that had been taken at "Thetford", I am wondering whether you didn't intend to say Asbestos instead of Thetford. The question is raised because of the following sentence in which you state that Dr. Stevenson would be very glad to send them down to you.

Sincerely yours,

Vandiver Brown
Secretary

VB:S

General Headquarters
July 19, 1944

H. K. Sherry, Asbestos

I have provided interested parties here at Headquarters with copies of Dr. Gardner's letter of July 15, copy of which I note was directed to you.

Dr. Gardner refers to between "two and three hundred" x-ray films provided by Dr. Stevenson and inspected by Drs. Gardner, Robert and Vestal. We would be interested in knowing how these films were selected by Dr. Stevenson. In the first place, did they represent the films which Dr. Stevenson considered "suspicious"? In the second place, were they selected from the films of the entire group of employees at Asbestos, both mill and factory? In particular, did they include those from the Textile Department of the factory which Dr. Stevenson considered questionable?

In the last paragraph of his letter, Dr. Gardner states he thought it desirable that Dr. Robert review all of the films that had been taken at Thetford and that Dr. Stevenson said he would be very glad to have them sent down to Saranac for examination. We feel that Dr. Gardner probably intended to refer to Asbestos instead of Thetford and I intend to ask Dr. Gardner if this is not the case, but in the meantime, you might check the point with Dr. Stevenson as well.

A prompt answer to the above questions will be appreciated.

Vandiver Brown

VB:S

CC S. A. Williams

July 20, 1944

Mr. Ernest Muehleck
President
Keasbey & Mattison Company
Ambler, Pa.

Re: Asbestos Dust Experiments

Dear Mr. Muehleck:

Attached you will find a copy of a letter of July 15 from Dr. Gardner which I am sure will interest you.

Although it will delay further the completion of his final report, I agree with Dr. Gardner that the additional material concerning clinical and x-ray experience with asbestos dust in Canada and the United States will be an important and valuable supplement to the experiments he has already performed and, since it will involve no additional expense, I have approved his proposal.

Sincerely yours,

Vandiver Brown
Secretary

VB:S (Similar letter sent to:
Enc. P.E. Bracing-Asbestos Mfg. Co.
T.M. Russell, Jr.-The Russell Mfg. Co.
D.L. Powell-U.S. Gypsum Co.
Thomas L. Gatzke, Gatzke Corp.
W. A. Blume, American Brakblok Div. of
L.J. Silverman-Un. Asb. & Rubber Co. etc.
over