TURNER BROTHERS ASBESTOS COMPANY LTD.

ROCHDALE.

JW/EW
Ref. NAM/JFK

To
J. L. Collins, Esq.,
Turner & Newall Limited,
Manchester.
Ref.

Private and Confidential 16th May, 1958.

Dear Mr. Collins,

Asbestosis Statistics

Length of employment in Scheduled Areas

Thank you for your letter of 9th May, with the interesting statistics about T.A.C. Co. Ltd's experience of asbestosis.

I am also interested to learn of the strict rule they operate concerning the length of employment in the Fibre Treating area. In our case, we have so many people in scheduled areas that it would be impracticable to transfer them to non-scheduled jobs after three years, and so we have devoted our efforts over the years to reducing the risks. In the fibre treating processes our new plant which is now coming into operation is so fully mechanised and enclosed that we hope to have very little dust indeed. The most difficult problem, however, remains, progress has been made but no final solution found, is the prevention of dust from the carding machines.

Since you are now going so deeply into asbestosis statistics, perhaps I should mention the work of Dr. Richard Doll, in association with Dr. Knox and our Personnel Department at Rochdale, the various stages of which may not be familiar to you. Dr. Doll is, of course, a national - or, indeed, international - authority on medical statistics, and is employed by the Statistical Research Unit of the Medical Research Council. In 1953 we asked him to analyse the results of 105 inquests on workers from our Rochdale factory, and make a mortality study of the 113 men who had been employed for 20 years or more in a scheduled area. As

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a result of this, Dr. Doll published a paper (without obtaining our permission) entitled "Mortality from lung cancer in asbestos workers". I enclose a copy. Although this evidence of the association of lung cancer and asbestosis was very disquieting, there are several encouraging features of the analysis. You will see from the comments on the second page and from the last paragraph of the summary that there is quite good evidence that the risk either of asbestosis or of lung cancer is much less in workers employed since 1931 and that the risk is probably diminishing. You will agree, I think, that conclusions of this kind by an independent statistician of Dr. Doll's standing are likely to carry more weight than any statistical studies done within the T. & N. Ltd. Group.

About the time this paper was being published Dr. Doll was doing a further study for us of the history of a much larger group of people employed for 10 years or more since 1st January, 1933, in scheduled areas, and here he was able to show no increased mortality as compared with the general population. We shall be having this latter analysis brought up to date by Dr. Doll within the next few months, and we hope that the latest evidence will be still more conclusive and encouraging. If you would like to see a typed copy of the unpublished results of the 10-year group, I should be glad to let you have it, but you may prefer to wait until the comparison of the situation 3 years ago and today has been completed.

Yours truly,

John Waddell

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