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SAFETY IS BETTER THAN COMPENSATION

THE INDUSTRIAL COMMISSION OF OHIO
COLUMBUS 15

DIVISION OF
SAFETY AND HYGIENE

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SUPERINTENDENT

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ASST. SUPERINTENDENT

PLAINTIFF'S
EXHIBIT
BRK-241

April 24, 1950

Richard W. Morse, Chairman
Industrial Commission of Ohio
Columbus, Ohio

Dear Mr. Morse:

Re: Moraine Products Div., General Motors Corp.
Dayton, Ohio

On April 20, 1950, accompanied by Mr. Don Hanna, a visit was made to this plant to obtain information regarding some reported cases of dermatitis among the employees. The investigation was made in compliance with your request.

At the time of investigation, Wayne Taylor, Personnel Director, and Dr. Lyda, Plant Physician, were interviewed.

The cases of dermatitis which have recently developed in Departments 5 and 7 of this plant were discussed. It was found by consulting hospital records that 14 cases developed in January, 5 in February, 4 in March and none in April, making a total of 23 cases among 334 men and women employed in these departments. It was further learned that all of these cases were given treatment and kept at employment, either at their regular work or by changing to different occupations where there would be no exposure to anything that might produce dermatitis.

A visit was made to Department 5 in which it was found that a number of men are employed operating machines on which bearings are reamed and polished. This operation is called bearingizing. During this operation a stream of oil is required on each bearing and about six of these operations are performed simultaneously on each machine. The operation is such that there is a splashing of oil from the moving parts in all directions and some of the oil is splashed upon the hands and arms of the operators. A metal shield has been installed which provides some protection. The operators are provided with gloves, pliofilm sleeves and aprons if they desire to use them.

About 10 days ago a sterilizing unit was installed by which all of the oil from these machines, after being filtered, is sterilized at a temperature of from 160° to 180° for a period of 30 minutes. Laboratory tests recently made have shown that this oil, which formerly contained bacteria, after being treated was reported sterile. Dr. Lyda expressed the opinion that some of the cases of dermatitis resulted from contact with the oil which had been used in these machines.

In Department 7, a number of men and women are engaged in handling and testing a number of small parts. A part of the process consists in rust-proofing these parts by immersion in a mixture of oil, alcohol and a rust inhibitor. Most of this work is done by placing the parts in a metal basket which is submerged in the solution and then placed in a centrifuge to remove the excess. After a number of cases of dermatitis developed during the month of January it was found that through an error one of the employees had been putting an excessive amount of rust inhibitor in the solution. This resulted in the formation of an irritating compound which was thought to have been responsible for many of the cases which had developed in that department. This has now been corrected and the solution kept with a minimum amount of the inhibitor. These employees are also provided with personal protective equipment.

Washrooms are provided and it is found that they are equipped with standard Bradley Units and various types of soap are being tried in an effort to find a preparation that will cleanse without producing irritation. Some difficulty has been experienced in getting the employees to thoroughly remove irritating substances from their hands and arms as is necessary in the proper prevention of dermatitis.

It is possible that some of the employees are exposed to skin irritants outside of their employment which may also be a factor in a few of the cases.

It is believed that this company has adequate facilities for making the necessary laboratory tests and are at present doing all that is possible to prevent the development of further cases of dermatitis. This is indicated by the fact that there has been a marked reduction in the number of cases during the past few weeks. Because of the satisfactory manner in which the situation has been handled by the company no recommendations were made. Should further cases develop we will be glad to make further investigation

Respectfully submitted,

W.E. Obetz
W.E. Obetz, MD
Medical Advisor.

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