

FILE NAME: Quebec Asbestos Mining Association (QAMA)

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Canada Asbestos Industry Written Up by Barry Castleman

Additional Documents from Albert Donnay Re Canada Asbestos Industry

Albert spent some added time at the industry IOEH library, and visited Pierre Vennat at La Presse.

1. News clippings: Montreal Star cover 3/20/75 -- unions finally got wise to Dr. Cartier not telling them when they had asbestosis; one guy was rated "A" by the clinic and died from asbestosis less than two years later. Cartier and his assistant J. Dussault admitted that they often did not advise the men of their disabilities, in order not to upset them and cause insecurity about their jobs. Dr. Dussault had been there since 1958, and said that he followed that policy despite uneasiness about its propriety. The company officials questioned all denied that they knew anything odd was going on, though the article noted their financial interest in avoiding a slew of comp claims. One particularly crass response (W.W. Oughtred, Pres. Asbestos Corp.) suggested that workmen's comp was really disguised welfare and that he had "never met anybody who said he had asbestosis". Carey workers had all but stopped using the Thetford Mines Clinic by 1975. The article explains the desperate situation of the men, who were afraid to file for comp and have to lose the income they had from mining.

Ibid., a companion front page story on Cartier is missing in Albert's copy, I will get this at Library of Congress and post later on. These stories provide numerous leads for further inquiry (union officials, docs, government people). The slip from this Cartier story shows that he is now about 72 years old. He retired at the Clinic in 1974, I think.

La Presse 4/25/75 -- Politician H. Lecours blasts the pneumoconiosis committee in the asbestos mining area as having sold out and lost the people's confidence. He referred to Cartier, in particular, as serving on both the Clinic and the government committee that supposedly enforced provisions of 1938/1956 law re government oversight. Correction: it was a legislative hearing, but Lecours is a doctor, and a politician.

Montreal Star 3/19/75 -- Notes that Mt. Sinai study findings were a surprise in Quebec, where embarrassed government officials spoke of renewed efforts to enforce industrial hygiene standards. So the cost of the controls and the cost of compensation had been effectively avoided by the companies all this time, thanks to Dr. Cartier.

- La Presse 3/22/75 -- only English in story is asbestos warning label.
2. GM Wheatley (Metropolitan Life) "Tuberculosis and Asbestosis" 1944 -- This report acknowledges that there is a very high rate of TB in Thetford Mines, but that the disease is common in women as well as the men; and that there is one other town with even higher TB rates. The report concludes that asbestos does not invite TB, as Ivan Sabourin put it (memo of 1966 at end of report). Not considered is the possibility that some TB-reported deaths were really asbestosis. However, there is some interesting news in this unpublished paper, which helps explain its obscurity. Pedley, a whore who published some terrible stuff in 1932 saying there's no lung disease in Quebec from asbestos, was a collaborator of Dr. Lanza. The never-published figures on their examinations of asbestos miners in Asbestos and Thetford Mines are offered in Table 1, p. 3. They looked at 195 men -- note this is clearly not a subgroup of the 1935 Lanza study, which included only 126 subjects -- and broke down the percentage with both 10 and more years of exposure and the percentage with asbestosis. A little arithmetic reduces it to this:

	<u>Asbestos</u>	<u>Thetford</u>
No. examined	141	54
% w/ more than 10 yrs exposure	22%	83.4%
(No. w/ 10+ yrs exp.)	(31)	(45)
No. with Asbestosis	18	24
% w/ asbestosis	12.7%	44.4%
(% w/ A'sis among 10-yr. employees, <u>assuming</u> all cases were among this group)		
	(58%)	(53%)

Met Life clearly was the insurer for at least two mines, and there were records of death claims used for the study (p. 7). Ten TB deaths are attributed to unsanitary conditions and poor eating habits. There is nothing said about deaths from asbestosis. The report closes by thanking Dr. Lanza for the use of his and Pedley's unpublished data, and for his advice in preparing the final (Wheatley) report.

Attached to the end of this report, #2578 in the QAMA (IOEH) library, is a 1966 memo from Ivan Sabourin, who apparently sent it over from his files to IOEH at that group's founding in 1966. It compares the then-current "prejudice" in connection with cancer and asbestos to the earlier one about asbestosis and TB, which was disproven by Wheatley and other researchers whose work was published.

3. Todd et al., Canad. Med. Assoc. J. 25: 757-760 (1956) -- Case report of asbestosis and lung cancer in smoking worker with 30 years exposure in asbestos mines.

Items 1-2 draw a horrid picture of the conditions in the asbestos mining industry. The evidence shows that the companies were aware of an extraordinary prevalence of asbestosis in Thetford, particularly, and also Asbestos (J-H), as of 1930. However, these findings were never published, and only the diversion of TB was ever paid notice in published records of these findings (Pedley, 1930). In fact, my notes on Pedley (Development of Knowledge about Asbestos Disease, 1977, p. 10) reflect that he wrote,

"...to our knowledge, however, no case of pneumoconiosis has ever been reported from asbestos in Canada, and the general impression among the miners is that the dust is not hazardous."

The full meaning of this statement, and what it did not state, is now clear. The sons and grandsons of the men kept ignorant by Pedley were kept in the dark by his successors for the next 45 years. Here's another remark from Pedley's 1930 paper:

"From the public health standpoint, however, it seems hardly likely that asbestosis will become of importance either from the standpoint of morbidity or mortality."

(Can. Publ. Health J. 21: 576-77, 1930)

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