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Mr. Waddell

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Copy of a letter from Dr. Knox dated
12th August
1958.

Epidemiology of Lung Cancer in
Asbestos Miners. (Braun & Truman)
Arch. of Occupation Health

In a cohort of approximately 6000 "miners" exposed for 5 years at least to three degrees of dustiness - not specified - 9 proved cases and possibly 12 lunger cancers occurred in the 6 years 1950-55.

This gives a rate of 25.3 per 100,000 for proved cases and 33.8 for total cases (not proved). This compared well with 22.5 per 100,000 for the rest of the Province and 20.8 per 100,000 throughout the Dominion of Canada. Montreal was 32.3 and other rates were 37.2 for the adult male population of United States.

Since 1940 there were 19 proved cases among miners. There are a total of 33 cases known of whom 4 are still living and 10 are unproved cases.

The paper makes no allowance for any alteration in working conditions at any time and does not give the total death rate in comparison with other areas - only the total number of deaths - 187. It does not give the number of people compensated for asbestosis or the total number of asbestotic deaths and the number of lung cancers in relation to this.

An attempt is made to include smoking habits in the calculations. No cases of lung cancer were found among the non smokers who were defined as not smoking an average of more than 5 cigarettes daily. The use of cigars and pipe tobacco was not regarded as smoking.

Since 1940 we have a total of 22 proved cases, in relation to a population of 1500 approximately.

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If we give ourselves a cohort of 1500 which is a crude figure and the number of 5 year workers will be less. There were 7 proved cases in the 6 years 1950-55. This would make our number for 6000 workers as 28. This would be roughly 3 times the Canadian Miners rate or 75 per 100,000 proved cases and 99 for total cases.

Asbestosis in this paper is regarded as the same disease in all parts of the world. It may be a milder disease in miners - and I think there is some evidence of this - but statistics with regard to asbestos miners do not apply to textile asbestos workers here. Here asbestos workers are "urban" and situated in the great ~~communities~~ conurbations with their high bronchitic rate. In Canada miners are rural workers for the most part and should share some of the advantages of rural life - including, as here, a low lung cancer rate.