FILE NAME: Colonial Sugar Refinery (CSR)

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PRESS ENQUIRY

mesothelioma

In 1948 Dr. Saint in Port Hedland gave warnings to people working at Wittenoom about asbestosis but he implied in his advice that asbestos was not particularly injurious because of the body reaction prevention to crystalise into the lungs.

Under the existing Health Regulations in Western Australia all miners had to be x-rayed and have a medical examination every two years and each man when x-rayed received a certificate, if fit, stating that his health was such that he could work in or about a mine. The real concern in those days was silicosis.

In the late 1950's Dr. Jim McNulty set himself up to research the problem of dust hazards. In a court case between 1954-1956 (check) Dr. McNulty gave evidence on behalf of A.B.A. that dust was not an industrial disadvantage in Wittenoom mine, and that the conditions there did not warrant a special allowance.

Subsequently McNulty conducted considerable research into dust hazards and was encouraging any persons found to have deterioration of health to claim pensions.

About 1960 a number of other doctors in Western Australia and elsewhere took up the question of dust hazards with particular reference to asbestosis.

However to the best of Mr. Thomas' recall it was the diseases of silicosis and asbestosis that were being watched and he cannot recall the term mesothelioma being used.

All work carried out in the mine and mill at Wittenoom was under strict Government control and the mine worked under close Government and union inspections. The mill was controlled by the same inspection as covered the mine and a considerable amount of money was spent in dust collection plant in the mill.

If the mine did not accord with Government standards it could be shut down at any time. A.B.A. enforced the Mining Act and the controls under it to the limit.