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MEN ON CONSTRUCTION

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FOREWORD BY DR. D. C. RENNIE

In considering the following report it is felt that a short description of the decisions reached at the start of construction and the overall arrangements made for medical attention, would be of interest.

The first question to be decided was the form the medical attention should take and the responsibility for carrying this out.

Fawley is a rural area 17 miles from the main Southampton hospitals, with one local General Practitioner and three residents some 4 to 5 miles away. It was estimated that some 6,000 men would be employed at the peak period. The Medical Department to the present Refinery was made responsible for the whole Medical Scheme for the construction period and for the camp, which was to be built.

This arrangement had three big advantages:—

1. The existing X-Ray and other ancillary equipment would be available for all employees, Contractors or otherwise.
2. The staff engaged could be offered a permanent job with pension, since the Refinery population would increase as the construction population fell. This enabled us to get staff who were keen on industrial medical work and wanted to remain in it. We got a far better type therefore than the man who was merely taking a temporary job for the sake of the money.
3. The Medical Officer already with the Company, knew the area, the hospital and health authorities, and the local practitioners, and could, therefore, make necessary contacts straight away.

Under paragraph 1 either duplicate equipment and staff would have had to be acquired and extra accommodations provided, or considerable time be lost sending many cases unnecessarily to hospital for X-Ray, Laboratory checks, etc.

Under paragraph
young enthusiastic
Diploma and wanted

Under paragraph 3

(a) Local hospital assistance particularly operations and the p carried out by the l advantage to the run

(b) The Camp wh Doctor and a hospital the Medical Officer blessing. Again this point of view and Department.

(c) The local Doc contacted and undert for members in the c This functioned well to which they were e

This Report gives further remarks are n

1. The Safety Engi Inspector, and thus p Acts and the relevan as the main Contract and could not be expe This gentleman coop and thereby added to

2. The Doctor appc able man. The fact th available within min gave a feeling of safet

Lastly I would like done at considerable heights, even up to

compressed air sickness to being in a hurry and to d down in the Admiralty sion of the divers was en- esulted.

ols, "amateur fixings", etc. rise. (Several unexploded ng excavations).

uniting, acid splashes, ce-

ns,
bestos).

tc.

cavations, etc.

nissing, inadequate or out on.

and hoists,
ndling.

cts, leading to numbness tc., were seen in a few in-

etal, wire ropes, etc.

INST OBJECTS:

ces of wood, etc.

ground.

VEHICULAR ACCIDENTS: (a) vehicles colliding,
(b) vehicles colliding with men,
(c) men falling whilst attempting to board or leave moving vehicles.

WELDING: (a) arc-eye,
(b) metal fume fever. A few cases of this, due to welding or flame cutting of galvanized metal, were seen. In each case, the welder did not know there was any connection between the fever and his work.

X- AND GAMMA RAYS: All pressure vessels had the welding checked by radiation photography, and the supervision of the crews was undertaken. 1,000 milligrams of radium was in use at one time, although radioactive isotopes are now being used as a gamma ray source. The normal radiation protection methods were employed. The selection of personnel, blood counts, test films, results, etc., were the medical responsibility. Supervision of crews on the job and methods of work were the responsibility of the supervisor of welding. No effects of X- or gamma radiation were observed in persons employed in this work.

Remote risks: (a) **ASBESTOS:** From sawing insulation material. As a risk amongst construction workers asbestosis is a theoretical possibility. The insulation used consisted of 85% magnesia, 15% asbestos in block form. This was applied to the various structures and wired on. A very small quantity of dust was produced in this operation. Wet asbestos containing pug was used to fill in cracks and to mould round flanges. No dust arose from this.

(b) **EFFECTS OF PITCH AND TAR:** Electrical conduit pipes coated in pitch were used. On warm sunny days men handling this pipe were seen with tar erythema ("smarts"). A few cases due to