[redacted] P-MET-328

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

General Headquarters
April 15, 1949

G. K. Foster

NOTED V.B.

Saranac Report

All of us read with much interest Dr. Ken Smith's summary and comments on the Saranac Report "Asbestos Pneumoconiosis" which you sent to Mr. Fisher on March 21, with copies to Ivan and to me.

It seems to us that one of the most significant of all the findings is that mentioned in Item B, pointing out the fact that a relatively small amount of long fibres can cause lung damage. It is important that we arrange to determine where long fibres may exist in the working atmosphere, whether the amount is enough to cause harm, and take action to eliminate them.

Under "Comments," Item 3 (a), reference is made to Dr. Gardner's statements that the most dangerous lengths of fibre are those of 5 to 15 microns in length. Ken Smith goes on to say that he is, however, inclined to believe the findings of this report that still longer fibres are probably more harmful. Referring to Dr. Gardner's earlier statements, Van Brown mentions that Dr. Gardner spoke of the harmful fibres as being "under 10 microns in greatest diameter" rather than those of 5 to 15 microns in length.

Also, under Item 3 (b), Ken Smith refers to Dr. Gardner's letter to Mr. Sabourin of February 23, 1944, and his belief that "the true hazard in asbestos plants is proportional to the amount of small, individual uncrushed fibres in the atmosphere . . ." Here again, Ken Smith mentions his preference to believe the recent Saranac findings, which seemed to indicate that action only of the long fibres is particularly harmful.

On the page marked "Comments" also, under I, Ken Smith speaks of the dust counts in the mills as 65% to 80% 5 microns or less in length, and rarely 1% 20 microns or longer. I had the impression that I saw the results of a study giving this type of information, but don't know what study it was or where it is now, and I wonder whether Ken Smith can give us this information so that we can look it up.

There is a question raised here about Ken Smith's point under III about the long fibre that is mined at Thetford as compared with that at Asbestos. It was said that practically any actually processed fibre is 3 microns or more in length and doubt was expressed as to whether there would be likely to be more longer fibre from the Thetford crude than from our own after it has reached the point of being processed. Perhaps the study I spoke of above may indicate some facts in respect to this or Ken may have some information that would cover this point.

We all felt Ken Smith's study to be a very excellent one and plan to make use of it in acquainting some of our other plants with this Saranac study.

J. P. Woodard

cc: Vandiver Brown
A. R. Fisher
K. W. Smith, M. D., Asbestos
Ivan Sabourin

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