

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND PREVENTIVE MEDICINE

McGILL UNIVERSITY

MONTREAL,

October 11, 1932.

N.L. Burnette, Esq.,
Metropolitan Life Insurance Co.,
Ottawa, Ont.

Dear Mr. Burnette:

You have asked me to let you have a statement regarding industrial hygiene at McGill in time for the American Public Health Association meeting this month.

As you know, I came to Montreal in August, 1927 to take charge of the industrial hygiene work at McGill. The first activity was the creation of the Industrial Clinic at the Montreal General Hospital. It was thought at the time that the best point of contact with industry was through a clinic to which cases of occupational disease might be sent for investigation and treatment. A considerable number of such cases were directed to the Clinic, particularly cases of lead poisoning, and contact was made with the industries from which they came. One plant with an exceptionally severe lead hazard actually erected a new building, partly, I believe, on our recommendation, and several plants have improved their working conditions, by installing various ventilating devices to carry away poisonous dusts and fumes. Several papers have been published on the subject of lead poisoning, copies of which are enclosed.

The occupational poisoning work has been considered a less important activity than others, particularly on account of the fact that the number of cases of occupational poisoning is small compared with other diseases which affect industrial workers. All evidence points to the fact that industrial workers suffer in the main from the same diseases which affect the general population, and that preventive medicine for industrial workers should be directed towards those diseases and not especially towards the so-called occupational diseases. For this reason, it was thought that a valuable service could be rendered industry in particular, and the community in general, if industrial health services could be established in the larger industries, so that the health of the workers could be brought under the immediate supervision of a doctor and a nurse.

A good deal of time was devoted to making contact with industries which, it was thought, would be interested in a scheme of this nature. Considerable success was achieved at first and five plants created health departments immediately under our supervision, while four or five other concerns were stimulated to establish medical departments. These medical departments have all given satisfaction and are still operating, but the industrial depression during the last three years has made progress in this work very difficult.

Industrial Dental Clinic

In connection with the work of the industrial health services,

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an industrial dental clinic was established, the activities of which are recorded in an attached re-print. This clinic has financed itself entirely and is having a certain amount of difficulty now in making both ends meet.

Industrial Medical Association of the Province of Quebec

As an outcome of the industrial hygiene work, the Industrial Medical Association, P.Q., was established in 1928. This is a bilingual Association which carries on independent activities, and is also considered a branch of the Province of Quebec Medical Association. Doctors, Pennoyer, Mercier, St. Jaques, and Tees, have been the successive presidents, and Dr. Ward and I have served as secretary. The organization took an active part at the request of the Workmen's Compensation Commission, in drafting the tariff of the 1928 Workmen's Compensation Law, and has held meetings approximately bi-monthly since its organization.

Montreal Health Survey

The Industrial Hygiene Department co-operated with the Montreal Health Survey Committee and prepared the industrial hygiene section of the report.

Study of Asbestosis

In co-operation with the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, a survey of two companies mining and milling asbestos, was made in July and September, 1930. Physical examination of some 150 men was made, together with chest X-rays, and an interesting state of affairs was disclosed, which was reported to Dr. M.J. Lanza of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, but to date permission has not been secured to publish the results of the study. ?

Lectures at McGill

Courses of lectures on industrial hygiene have been given every year to the third year medical students and graduate nurses, social workers and architects. ✓

General Publicity

A number of public addresses have been given on the subject of industrial hygiene. Various papers have been prepared for publication or presentation at scientific meetings, most of which are enclosed.

I have been submitting reviews and editorials to the Canadian Medical Association Journal, and have also acted as joint editor with Dr. Cunningham of the Industrial Hygiene Section of the Canadian Public Health Association Journal.

A representation favouring the creation of Division of Industrial Hygiene in the Provincial Health Department, has been made to the Social Insurance Commission and the Province of Quebec, and this Commission has recommended such a Division to the Provincial Government.

Present Activities

The Industrial Clinic has been moved to the University under the immediate direction of Dr. Vance Ward. The supervision of the plant medical departments continues, and in addition, two new activities have been started and are now in operation: (1) a study of mercury poisoning and (2) an industrial health survey;

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- (1) Our attention was drawn a year or so ago to the mercury hazard in one of the plants outside the City, and also to the fact that a relatively small amount of experimental work had been done on industrial mercury poisoning. The co-operation of the Department of Pharmacology at McGill was obtained and an experimental study with dogs is now in progress to ascertain the minimum permissible concentration of mercury in air. It is anticipated that a publication of this study will shortly be ready. This study is being financed entirely from the Industrial Hygiene funds. (Note: Partly by salary. U. of Q. 500 per A)
Rough 2400
- (2) In co-operation with the Canadian Tuberculosis Association, the Provincial Health Department, and the Department of Industrial Hygiene at McGill, a study has been started with particular reference to tuberculosis in industrial workers, but also with reference to general health. Some 2,000 workers in three companies have already received a complete physical examination, with chest X-rays, and it is hoped to continue this survey so as to include 5,000 employees in different occupations. This survey has been under way for a year, and is being financed, partly by the Provincial Health Department, partly by the industries concerned, and partly by ourselves.
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The \$25,000 promised by the Metropolitan Life Insurance has all been paid, and some \$4,000 is left to carry on the work. We are in hopes that the mercury study can be completed within this appropriation, but it will not be possible to finish the industrial health survey unless additional funds are forthcoming.

An activity which we have been endeavouring to establish for some years, is a co-operative health service to plants too small to provide a complete service of their own. An endeavour was made to get this service under way, financed by the companies themselves, but various difficulties presented, chief of which was the scepticism of the employers of its practicability. Since this scheme has been successful in Philadelphia and Hudson County, New Jersey, it seems likely that when better times return, if a demonstration were made perhaps in co-operation with the Royal Edward Institute, employers might be convinced of the desirability of such a scheme. We feel this would be of value to the community in general, and to the industries affected in particular, and might be of actual economic value to your own company.

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These are the main facts in connection with the industrial hygiene work at McGill University.

Yours very truly,

Frank G. Pedley

Frank G. Pedley, M.D.
Assistant Professor, Industrial Hygiene.

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1930 Peckay Study shown to Lanza

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