

Dust Becoming Bigger Hazard in Industry; More Workers Affected

Dust has been exposed as a serious health hazard in industry by an extensive X-ray survey of 4000 Melbourne workers in dusty trades.

The investigation disclosed that cases of silicosis and asbestosis — serious lung diseases which often young men — were being found.

The survey was conducted by the industrial hygiene division of the Victorian Health department.

Dr. D. L. G. Thomas, who supervised the survey, said many workers were being slowly incapacitated by dust, without knowing it.

Others, complaining of shortness of breath, tiredness, tightness of the chest and perhaps a cough, had not associated the cause.

Workers exposed to harmful dust included

millers, cotton, brick and tile makers, furnace bricklayers, mineral earth workers, masons and quarrymen, boiler makers, welders and metal polishers.

Silicosis was caused by prolonged breathing of dust containing silica particles, rain, used in rubber factories, iron or iron oxide, cotton dust, sugar cane dust and coal dust caused similar conditions.

Big Increase
Dr. Thomas said before the survey was made the number of known dust victims in Victoria was 222, of whom 94 were miners.

The investigation brought the number up to 1100, including 265 miners.

Silicosis had long been recognized as an occupational disease in mining, but its extent in industry had not been realized until the survey had been undertaken.

The survey found a particularly high incidence of asbestosis among workers regularly handling asbestos. A third of the asbestos workers tested showed signs of development of the disease.

Of 250 asbestos workers X-rayed, the health of 30 had been definitely impaired and 40 others showed early effects.

Dr. Thomas said some of the stricken workers in advanced stages of the disease were in a pitiful condition. They were unable to continue working, and the slightest effort made them gasp for breath.

Asbestos dust consisted of millions of minute needles which pierced the delicate fabric of the lung, leaving scars that made it inelastic and unable to expand.

Silica particles set up a chemical reaction in the lung, creating tiny nodules of embedded glass fibres. Asbestosis increased the incidence of lung cancer, while silicosis was often associated with tuberculosis.

Asbestos took about five to

30 years to gain grip, according to the intensity of exposure. Signs of asbestosis had been found in sputum tests in as short a period as 15 months.

Once established silicosis did not improve when the sufferer was removed from exposure to dust, and cases had been recorded where a positive X-ray had been obtained more than 30 years after the last known exposure.

Recently the condition of a woman who 15 years ago was exposed to silica dust for seven years developed as such that

she was now almost totally incapacitated.

Dr. Thomas warned against a new dust hazard — radium — which did not affect the lungs, but had other serious effects.

Used to harden steel, it was also found in the soot formed by burning oil.

More than 20 workers had become ill in the past six months after inhaling it, mainly through cleaning oil-burning furnaces without masks and protective clothing.

Dr. Thomas added that most lead poisoning was caused by the inhalation of lead dust.

Cost No Object in Atomic Test

PERTH, Thursday. — Britain has placed no limit on expenditure to extract all information she needs from the vital atomic tests to be held at Monte Bello Islands in April.

This was made clear at a press conference today by Dr. W. H. Wheeler, newly appointed scientific adviser to the United Kingdom High Commissioner in Australia.

During two years in Australia, he will also head the Australian staff of the British Ministry of Supply, which controls the atomic energy and missile development.

Wheeler said no nation in the world had yet fired an atomic weapon in a guided fashion.

Even when guided weapons and atomic warheads had been perfected, there would be reluctance to hold such a test on the mainland, and it would only be done because of great necessity with the most elaborate safeguards.

Guided Missiles

Dr. Wheeler said no nation in the world had yet fired an atomic weapon in a guided fashion.

Dr. Wheeler was formerly Director of Guided Weapons Research and Development for the British Ministry of Supply, and has been associated with the Ministry's rocket development programme since it began in 1937.

Dr. Wheeler said that for anti-aircraft defence, surface-to-air guided weapons would be cheaper and probably more effective than fighters.

Dr. Wheeler said that the Woomera rocket range and Australian atomic test grounds were indispensable to ambitious British research programmes.

Without question, Woomera was the world's best guided weapons range, but for very long-distance tests, it was likely that missiles would be fired into the Indian Ocean.

Scouts "Home"



THIS IS THE END of a long on-again off-again hike through the mountains. Per of his one-man tent to chat to Ke

Fijian Scout Mountain

It is not often that Mr. Central Highlands is climb.

But that is what happened on one of the post-Pan Pacific jamboree hikes which ended at Warburton yesterday.

Patrol Leader 17-year-old Peni Waseiratu from Fiji walked nearly 40 miles through wild bush country clad in ankle-length slacks and sandals.

And at the foot of Mr. Riggall he decided he could do better in bare feet, so off came his sandals.

His hiking party of 13 scouts was one of 30 who over the past four days have covered a total of 18,000 miles in the central highlands.

Early last night the first of the 49 scouts, several of them from overseas contingents, arrived back at their base camp on the banks of

Rad

The unnamed scoutmaster has been scale map; leader

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