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DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: Letter to Mr. C-E.A. Winslow, VP NSC, from Mr. Cameron, Managing Director, NSC, RE NSC Statement that Silicosis is Preventable



NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL

INCORPORATED

For Safety - at Work - on the Street - in the Home

CIVIC OPERA BUILDING - 20 NORTH WACKER DRIVE

Chicago

Mr. C.-E. A. Winslow
Vice-President, N.S.C.
New Haven, Conn.

January
6
1931

Dear Dr. Winslow:

Several weeks ago our member, Mr. Harold S. Falk, Vice-President of The Falk Corporation of Milwaukee (also President of the Wisconsin Manufacturers' Association) complained that the following statement in the advertisement of the Standard Safety Equipment Company of Chicago, in the December issue of the NATIONAL SAFETY NEWS - "Silicosis is preventable and it is up to the employer to do this job. If one of your workmen falls a victim to Silicosis, don't blame him - blame yourself," was unfair to employers and would alienate all Wisconsin members. Mr. Falk also served notice of the withdrawal of his membership which had been maintained since 1913.

Several letters were interchanged and I made an appointment with Mr. Falk to see him in Milwaukee with the President of the Standard Safety Equipment Company, Mr. Larry Dickson, also this year the Chairman of our Accident Prevention Equipment Manufacturers' Section. As the result of several hours of conference Mr. Falk has promised to write a letter commenting on the draft of the Sand Blast Report which had been sent to him a week previously. When the report was received it had been sent by the mail department to their safety inspector who had not shown it to Mr. Falk, so he was unacquainted with it when we met in conference. Mr. Falk had in his office Mr. C. O. Bartlett, now a Consulting Engineer in Milwaukee, but employed for 18 years with Gueder Paesche and Fry. Mr. Falk employed Mr. Bartlett 18 months ago to spend all of his time, as the Consultant of the Wisconsin Manufacturers' Association, on the problem of silicosis. Mr. Bartlett talked glibly about the complications of the problem; said that the National Safety Council has probably not studied the problem thoroughly; that it is practically impossible for industries to provide absolute protection to the worker under all of the conditions in which sand is used in the foundry. Mr. Falk produced pictures of many steel castings and described the conditions under which they were taken out of the moulds; that many of these complicated

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castings could not be sand blasted under controlled conditions and that theoretical atmospheric counts under specified working conditions were of little value.

Mr. Falk also referred to the study now in process under the direction of Mr. Bartlett in the State of Wisconsin, for which he personally raised a fund of \$10,000 by employers. Reference was made to Dr. H. K. Pancoast, of the Medical Department of the University of Pennsylvania, as knowing more about Silicosis than any one in America, and that he had recently testified that he had changed his mind on the whole problem of Silicosis and so forth. Much was said about theoretical investigations such as are made by Dr. Greenburg and Mr. Bloomfield.

I visited two other large corporations in Milwaukee during the afternoon - A. O. Smith and Company and Allis-Chalmers - and was told by both of these members that they did not have the problem to deal with but that there was considerable alarm in Wisconsin because of the possible ruination of industry if it was penalized for all cases of Silicosis. I know very well that the problem of border-line cases; conflicting medical testimony; controversies between political bodies and employers, have little to do with the determination of reasonable conditions under which workers should be protected. Typical case cited: worker 68 years old; in the employ of the company 32 years and when slowing up in his work and nearly discharged went to a doctor and was told he had Silicosis; claim instituted under the Wisconsin Law.

I asked Mr. Bartlett if he could attend your meeting in New York next Monday, the 11th, but he hesitated because of the expense. I imagine Mr. Falk will say something about this in his letter to be received in a day or two.

I was told more than a week ago about the two recent court decisions in Belleville, Illinois, when one worker was awarded \$12,000 for permanent total disability due to Silicosis contracted in a sand blasting operation; and another of more than \$14,000 to an employee under similar circumstances. The President of the Northern Blower Company of Cleveland (known to us since 1913) dropped into the office and said he was giving testimony in many cases now being tried in court; that there were 80 pending cases in New Jersey; 5 in Boston, and many others throughout the country. He said a good deal in criticism of the employer for his indifference and lack of definite day-by-day interest in the real protection of the worker.

My impression is that we are going to have another situation on our hands similar to the Spray Coating Investigation and Report. Perhaps we should not take Mr. Falk's protest too seriously, but I hope you will guide the conference on Monday in your usual judicial manner to make sure that the recommendations in the report are very carefully considered. I have assured Mr. Falk that we would be very glad to have his own experience and that our committee welcomed recommendations from any one because we wanted the report to reflect the practical experience of industry and to make

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recommendations that were possible to carry out.

I shall be unable to attend the meeting myself because of emergency engagements in Minnesota, Tuesday, January 12, but Dr. Sappington will be present at the meeting and ready to be of help to you.

Sincerely yours,

W. H. Cameron

W. H. Cameron
Managing Director

WHC:CM

P. S. - I suppose you know that the Metropolitan has been conducting an investigation in Wisconsin for some time past. The report will be out soon. Have you seen it? If not, could you get a copy from McConnell?

WHC