

FILE NAME: Colonial Sugar Refinery (CSR)

DATE: 1960 & 1961

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DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: Letters Discussing Medical Records of Workers Employed by Australian Blue Asbestos with Silicosis & Asbestosis & Company Response to Dust Problem

(102)

H. MAYNARD RENNIE  
F.R.C.P. (LOND.) F.R.A.C.P.  
TELEPHONE: BW 7711  
(AFTER 4 P.M.) XL 2340

MACQUARIE CHAMBERS,  
183 MACQUARIE STREET,  
SYDNEY

30th October, 1961.

Dr. D.D. Letham,  
Department of Public Health  
Box 134. G.P.O.  
PERTH. W.A.

Dear Dr. Letham,

Thank you for your letter of the 2nd October 1961 concerning the employee ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~. I have perused his history with great interest and also looked at the slides which I return herewith as you requested. Thank you for letting me see them.

I have been in touch with the Company again a few days ago and I am informed that a conference was held with the Mines Department in Perth, a Mr. Thomas of Australian Blue Asbestos a mining engineer and an ex manager at Wittenoom were present. The Company has now made arrangements to take regular dust samples and make counts on the konimeter and this will be done regularly in order to give a series of readings under varying conditions. Samples of dust have also been sent to ventilatory engineers in United States of America seeking their comments on dust counting particularly in relation to asbestos.

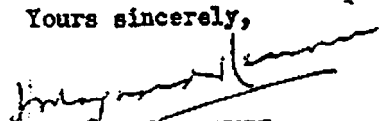
The Company will also be very pleased indeed to receive from medical sources advice on what is regarded as "safe dust count levels". It will then be possible to compare such recommendations with actual findings over a period of a few months. It will then be possible to determine whether further action is necessary. In the meantime I am continuing my enquiries along the lines of securing this information and I shall be most happy to receive from you any comments or advice that you may have at present or are able to procure.

This seems to me to be the sort of action that is desired in the circumstances and I hope that you agree. If not, I will be most interested to hear your further suggestions.

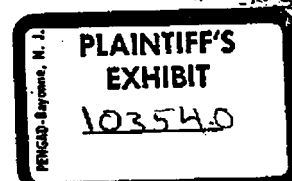
I am sending a copy of this letter to Dr. Bruce Hunt and Dr. McNulty.

Kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

  
H. MAYNARD RENNIE

*Patient name deleted  
J. Day  
27/5*



DISTRICT HOSPITAL

KALGOORLIE.

JMc:FG.

Date 25th October, 1961.

Dr. H. Maynard Rennie,  
F.R.C.P. (Lond.) F.R.A.C.P.,  
Macquarie Chambers,  
183 Macquarie Street,  
SYDNEY, N.S.W.

Dear Dr. Rennie,

Many thanks for your letter and for your interest in the health of workers employed by Australian Blue Asbestos. At a meeting in Perth recently, between representatives of the Company, and Mines and Public Health Department, we discussed the situation and it is to be hoped, that there is now a better appreciation of the seriousness of the consequences of dust in the mine and mill.

I was able to supply details of 34 men, seriously affected by a mixture of asbestosis and silicosis, whose disease could reasonably be attributed to Wittenoom. One of them is dead already and at least 3 are dying. There are also 22 men in whom there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that they are developing disease.

The man who died was aged 48 and worked about 2 years in the mill. Post-mortem showed gross asbestosis and silicosis and a malignant cancer of the pleura directly attributable to his work in Wittenoom. I am seriously concerned that these cancers of the pleura which are being reported in large numbers from South Africa, are due to an individual susceptibility and minimal exposure to blue asbestos (Crocidolite). Crocidolite appears to cause lung cancers.

15 had less than 5 years mining.

3 " " " 6 " "

5 " " " 7 " "

2 " " " 8 " "

11 " about 10 or more years mining.



(40)

I/815/60  
DDL/PM

5th December, 1960.

Dr. Alan Bell,  
Director,  
Division of Occupational Health,  
Box 31, George Street Nth. P.O.,  
SYDNEY. N.S.W.

Dear Dr. Bell,

Asbestos Dust Counts

Thank you for the answer to my query. However, one part of the letter still remains unanswered and that is how do you estimate the asbestos content of a sample of dust? The point I was trying to make in my previous letter was that for given concentrations of silica, upper limits of a dust count are designated. As far as I can ascertain, no comparable figures have been worked out for asbestos.

Can you give me a lead then as to how the asbestos content of a dust sample can be ascertained? Is there any known method during a dust count of distinguishing asbestos fibres from other dust particles.

Yours faithfully,

(D.D. Letham)  
PHYSICIAN  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH.

PLAINTIFF'S  
EXHIBIT  
193420  
FRIEDMAN, Sydney, N. S. W.