PLAINTIFF'S EXHIBIT

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MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND NATIONAL SERVICE

Please address any reply to
THE CHIEF INSPECTOR OF FACTORIES,
and quote:
F.18481/2/K

Tel. No. WHItehall 6200

FACTORY DEPT.,
ST. JAMES SQUARE,
LONDON, S.W.1.

August, 1945

Dear Sir,

Asbestos Insulation aboard Ships

I am concerned by the considerable development during the war years in the use of asbestos, either alone or as part of a mixture, in the Shipbuilding and Shiprepairing Industries mainly for the purpose of heat and sound insulation, and the accompanying increase in the number of workers exposed to risk of injury to health through asbestosis.

If the risk is found to continue, the question will arise of including some statutory requirements on the subject when the Factories Act Regulations for constructional and other work in ships are being revised and extended, or of issuing a further code of regulations dealing particularly with the use of asbestos. I would, however, emphasize that, while asbestos dust may not have any apparent effects at first, experience shows that, particularly if the workers are exposed to the dust in substantial concentrations, serious results are apt to develop later. It is therefore important that, even if the work will only be temporary, all reasonably practicable steps should be taken to reduce the risk to a minimum.

I suggest that protection can be secured on the following basis:

(1) In some cases preparatory work, e.g. the making up of insulation mattresses, to which the Asbestos Industry

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Regulations, 1931, apply is carried on in a shed in the shipbuilding yard or near the dockside; in such cases those Regulations should, so far as the provisions are applicable, be carefully observed in practice.

(2) On board ship steps should be taken, in accordance with the spirit of the Regulations, to prevent unnecessary concentrations or accumulations of asbestos dust - for instance by having good ventilation arrangements in confined spaces, damping down dust, and clearing up asbestos debris and accumulations of dust as soon as practicable.

(3) The provision of a respirator (Home Office Mark No. 584042 or other approved type) for each workman engaged in the fitting or removal of any dry insulating material containing asbestos, on board ship.

(4) The provision of a similar respirator for all persons engaged in the spraying of asbestos or asbestos mixtures and work ancillary thereto which renders them liable to exposure to dust or spray. During spraying, no other person should work in the same compartment unless also provided with a respirator.

(5) No person under 18 should be employed in any process giving rise to asbestos dust or in any compartment or enclosed space where such a process is being carried on.

(6) Specific arrangements for supervising the maintenance, care and use of respirators.

I may say that these arrangements have been accepted by the Shipbuilding Employers' Federation and by the Trade Unions concerned, and I therefore hope you will be prepared at once to accept the precautions suggested.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient Servant,

A. W. Garrett.

H.M. Chief Inspector of Factories.

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