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DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: Letter RE Pulmonary Cancer in the Asbestos Industry

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June 19, 1950.

Mr. A. L. Foshole,
Asbestos Corporation Ltd.,
Chalfont St Giles, Eng.

Re: Preliminary Report in the
Asbestos Industry.

Dear Mr. Foshole:

I have the pleasure to submit a preliminary report
on the meeting which took place at the Institute of Industrial
Medicine, Columbia University, New York, on June 17, 1950.

Were present: Dr. A. Lanza,
Dr. C. Smith,
Dr. Nelson,
Dr. Kenneth Smith,
Dr. J. Cartier.

The main subjects exposed and discussed were the
following:

Dr. Lanza mentioned that he has been invited by the Executive
of the Memorial Hospital to take charge of any research or survey
work on Occupational Cancer and for that purpose Drs. C. Smith
and Nelson have been transferred from the Memorial Hospital to the
Institute of Industrial Medicine under Dr. A. Lanza.

Drs. C. Smith and Nelson made a brief exposure of the work involved
in a study on the potential hazard of the asbestos fibers as a
carcinogenic factor, which work will consist of:

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1. Epidemiological Study.

Such epidemiological study is very valuable provided it is well conducted and as a matter of fact Herewether in Great Britain and Hooper in San Antonio have based their conclusions purely on epidemiological or statistical study. So as far as the Province of Quebec the more accurate material on which a scientific epidemiological study could be made.

2. Experimental Study:

Such investigation is very complicated, is a long and expensive affair and includes consideration of many problems.

A. Material to be used?

- (a) Air-borne material.
- (b) Short or long fibers.
- (c) Mixture of fibers and rocks.
- (d) Fibers from South Africa.
- (e) Fibers from Canada.

B. Different techniques of experimentation?

- (a) Implantation.
- (b) Intra-tracheal injection.
- (c) Intra-peritoneal injection.
- (d) Intra-plenural injection.
- (e) Inhalation method.

3. Apparently there is no objection on the part of the Institute to ask for the collaboration of the Bureau Laboratory.

4. The approximate cost of the projected study will be known with the official report of Dr. Langer.

Personal Remarks:

1. Although in all probability Langer and his associates could find the necessary experimental qualified workers, the actual staff at the Institute is not sufficient to make a complete study.

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2. Would this recent New York Institute of Industrial Medicine have the same prestige and authority on questions of Cancer as had the Memorial Hospital, this aspect has its importance when will come the time of the conclusions or the time of having these conclusions accepted.
3. With some reluctance because as a doctor I am indeed interested in any research work but nevertheless I think I must say that such experimental study could be regarded as being rather of a scientific than of a practical interest due to the fact that if experimentally the pulmonary cancer is reproduced on animals, it would mean a positive relationship between the asbestos factor and the cancer, but on the other hand if experimentally the cancer is not reproduced by asbestos fibers even then, it would not be possible to say that there is no relationship between asbestos factor and cancer.

Conclusion.

For the numerous reasons given in this report, I would be inclined to think that a scientific epidemiological study would be quite simple, quite rapid and above all more conclusive than the experimental study, in any case this latter could be realized afterwards.

Yours very truly,

PC,JS

Paul Cartier, M.D.

CC to Mr. L. G. Smith.
Mr. J. J. Johnson.
Mr. Ivan Sabourin, M.D.