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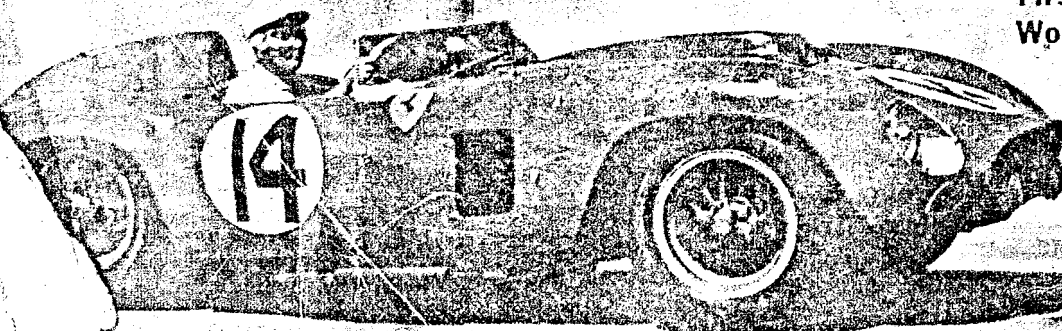
Cavalier

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page 43

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CAVALIER

A 100

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**ON THE JOB
CANCER:
THE KILLER
THEY WON'T
TRACK DOWN**



Cancer Probers

By **DREW PEARSON**
Nov. 19.—The pub
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This is part of the real background of the cranberry dispute. It's been brewing for a long time, and only came to a head when the Food and Drug Administration was given power by a recent act of Congress to crack down on farmers, cosmetic companies, food and chemical companies immediately, without protracted hearings in the courts.

The cancer firings of doctors was spelled out in testimony before the House Interstate Commerce Committee when it tightened its Drug Act last year. The doctors who got fired were dropped from New York University and the University of California. The cancer hazards in industry; I don't know whether they have been published a paper which has produced can-

The cancer firings of doctors was spelled out in testimony before the Food and Drug Act last year. The doctors who got fired were: Dr. William E. Smith, dropped from New York University when he persisted in warning of cancer hazards in industry; Dr. William C. Hueper, dropped by du Pont when he published a paper showing that beta-naphthylamine (used for dyes) produced cancer in dogs; Dr. Arthur Vorwald, dropped as director of the Saranac Laboratory when he reported that lung cancer could be induced by a chemical dust of industrial importance; Dr. Robert Collier Page, who was eased out as medical director of Standard Oil of New Jersey when he campaigned for a major study of car inducing properties of chemicals.

DR. SMITH,
on for

When we saw the report on cancer in industry by the widely read Washington columnist, Drew Pearson, we asked Theodore Irwin to investigate for the readers of CAVALIER. Here are the facts our reporter uncovered

● In a report following the 1959 temporary federal ban on sale of certain cranberries, Drew Pearson, the widely syndicated Washington columnist, made these damning revelations:

"The public doesn't know it, but the battle over food additives and cancer-suspected chemicals has been so cut-throat that four doctors and scientists lost their jobs when they took firm stands against certain companies and institutions interested in the continued use of these additives and chemicals.

"This is part of the real background of the cranberry dispute. It's been brewing for a long time, and only came to a head when the Food and Drug Administration was given power by a recent act of Congress to crack down on farmers, cosmetic companies, food and chemical companies immediately, without protracted hearings in the courts.

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"This experience is not unique." ment, university and industrial res obstructed while apologists for car

Carcinogens are cancer-prod

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THERE WERE SOME attestation. But his testimony was of these was Dr. W. C. Hueper in charge of the environmental Cancer Institute. He wrote:

"My activities in fieldwork"
Health Services"

“My activities in fieldwork
U. S. Public Health Service
part of the summer
activities have

by Theodore Irwin

11,000,000 Workers 1/21 Die of Cancer

Continued from preceding page

"Dr. William E. Smith, dropped from New York University when he persisted in warning of cancer hazards in industry; Dr. William C. Hueper, dropped by du Pont when he published a paper showing that beta-naphthylamine (used for dyes) produced cancer in dogs; Dr. Arthur Vorwald, dropped as director of the Saranac Laboratory, when he reported that lung cancer could be induced by a chemical dust of industrial importance; Dr. Robert Collier Page, who was eased out as medical director of Standard Oil of New Jersey, when he campaigned for a major study of cancer-inducing properties of chemicals . . ."

While the cancer-scare hullabaloo over cranberries, poultry, black jellybeans and other consumer items has stirred up the public to the menace of chemical additives, the further threat—risk of contracting cancer on industrial jobs—has thus far seemed to be hushed up. As shocking are the charges that doctors and scientists trying to safeguard lives are being blackjacked.

And the danger of on-the-job cancer isn't an imaginary one. Of some 68,000,000 workers in the United States, 17,000,000 will become cancer victims because of their jobs, according to the American Cancer Society. Unless a miracle occurs, 11,000,000 of these will eventually die of cancer.

Is it true, as Pearson implied, that powerful companies are blackballing doctors who dare to delve into the causes of cancer among workers?

Are government agencies sabotaging research in occupational cancer?

Does a conspiracy of silence exist in certain industries to prevent disclosure of on-the-job cancer?

Are dedicated scientists, in university labs and elsewhere, being forced to stop investigating such dangers?

To answer these vital questions, CAVALIER assigned me to dig up all the facts available. Although Pearson has been known at times to be an alarmist, his accusations deserved checking and amplification. This is my unbiased, no-holds-barred report.

My first visit was to Dr. William E. Smith at his home in Englewood, N.J. Tall, intense, youthful looking and indefatigable, Bill Smith had spent 17 years in cancer research and played a big role in pushing through the Food and Drug Law amendment on food additives two years ago that led to the cranberry episode. Was he actually fired by New York University for his warnings on cancer hazards?

"I was sandbagged," he told me bluntly. "And I want to tell the truth because I believe it's an important matter of public health."

As a specialist in experimental pathology, Dr. Smith explained, he was for seven years an associate professor of industrial medicine at N.Y.U. His work was primarily with some of the largest chemical companies in the country, testing chemicals on animals to see if cancer developed. The idea was to see if workers or consumers were being placed in jeopardy.

"On a scientific mission to Belgium," he said, "I

gathered evidence showing that workers exposed to asbestos dust were more apt to get lung cancer than other men. When I returned to this country, I presented this incriminating information to my chief, Dr. A. J. Lanza, then director of N.Y.U.'s Institute of Industrial Medicine. I hoped to go ahead with animal experiments on asbestos dust."

But Dr. Lanza was firmly against it. "I'd advise you to keep out of this problem," he cautioned the researcher.

At the time, Dr. Smith learned, Lanza had been hired as consultant for asbestos interests.

Shortly after, when Dr. Smith ignored the warning and continued his investigations, Lanza informed him that his appointment as associate professor would not be renewed. Dr. Smith was dumped. Since then, it has been verified that cancer is an occupational disease among asbestos workers in the United States.

Checking the hearings on the Food and Drug Law amendment, I found that Dr. Smith testified to all this before the Congressional committee. When Dr. Lanza was asked to give his side of the story, he denied the implications. "Dr. Smith's non-reappointment," he insisted, "was based on the judgment that his training and competence made him unsuitable for continued responsibility."

Bill Smith struck back, citing his record. A graduate of Johns Hopkins, he had held important posts at such eminent institutions as Harvard Medical School, the Massachusetts General Hospital, Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research and the Sloan-Kettering Institute for Cancer Research. He has had more than 40 papers on cancer published in scientific journals.

"I consider myself expendable," Dr. Smith told me. "But I see one cancer scientist after another pushed out of his work and perhaps out of his career. One lobbyist for big industries even remarked to me, 'Cancer researchers are a lot of trouble-makers.'"

"What happened to me I've seen experienced by other investigators who became too inquisitive about carcinogens [cancer-producing agents] in a company's products or manufacturing processes. Government, university and industrial research in this field has been obstructed, while apologists for carcinogens are in great demand at \$50,000 a year. You have to play ball with some large corporations if you want to hold your job—at the expense of employees and the public."

Today, Bill Smith has a job as professor of health education at Fairleigh Dickinson University in New Jersey. From another well-known scientist, I heard that Dr. Smith has been "blackballed in industry."

My next trip was to Bethesda, Md., where I pinned down Dr. William C. Hueper, one of the world's leading authorities on cancer. He is now chief of the environmental cancer section in the National Institutes of Health.

A graying, ruddy, medium-sized man with a German accent, the 66-year-old, pioneering scientist has long been known in the research world as a fiery rebel. Highly

For his integrity, he was fired. To what profession caused by industrial problems. Taking me to another office for privacy, he spoke freely.

"I'm too old now to be afraid of being fired," he said. "What happened at du Pont? Was Drew Pearson right in saying Dr. Hueper had been fired for stepping out of line?"

From testimony at Congressional hearings I had learned that Dr. Hueper had been assistant medical director of the du Pont Company when he published a report on his experiments with beta-naphthylamine. This is the dangerous chemical dye which has caused bladder cancer in hundreds of workmen who handled it when used in coloring margarine and butter. The fact that it was responsible for tumors in men was established by Dr. Hueper's tests on lab dogs. This is how he explained the du Pont fracas to me:

"I was asked by a du Pont official *not* to study histologically [examine tissue structure] the testicles of experimental animals exposed to poisonous chemicals. Why? I was told it was because du Pont was not interested in the testes of its workers! My reply was that if I would have to do non-scientific investigations, du Pont would have to look for another pathologist. A few weeks later, I was informed I could be dispensed with."

Confirmation of the reason for Dr. Hueper's firing has come from Dr. E. S. Ross, chief medical director of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen. "I recall," relates Dr. Ross, "that the medical director of the du Pont Company told me that Dr. Hueper had been discharged shortly after showing that beta-naphthylamine induced cancer."

What about government obstruction and snafus on cancer research projects? At the National Cancer Institute of the U.S. Public Health Service, a program had been set up for study of lung cancer risks for men in the chromate industry. Cooperation of industrial management was necessary. But lobbyists for a group of chemical industries had objected to field studies under the program. In the words of Dr. Hueper:

"My activities in field work on environmental cancer were discontinued when I was asked to stop such activities and have no further contacts with industry or state health departments in matters of occupational and environmental cancer. This was brought about by a complaint, as I was officially told, about my activities in regard to studying conditions bringing about lung cancer among workers in the chromate industry made to my superiors in Washington in behalf of the American chromate industry by Dr. A. J. Lanza, as its medical representative. Dr. Lanza apparently acted in the role of a lobbyist.

"Due to these lobbying activities of Dr. Lanza, not only my field studies have come to an end, but there was for some time serious interference even with my experimental work in the field of occupational cancer.

"It is my belief that, through the intervention of Dr. Lanza, not only the interest of American industries with cancer hazards to workers but of the American people at large, and of the American medical profession, was seriously damaged."

In reply to these charges, the then surgeon general, Lewis E. Burney, maintained that the U.S. Public Health Service continued its field studies involving suspected carcinogens after a "reorganization" under another director.

...the integrity of the medical profession...
...the occurrence of lung cancer hazards.

"A high medical official of the Atomic Energy Commission," he said, "declared such an undertaking was nonsense and tried to block it. But he was unsuccessful."

Later Dr. Hueper was invited by the Colorado State Medical Society to address its annual meeting in Denver on cancer hazards in Colorado. He included in his prepared text a description of excessive lung cancer incidence among radioactive ore miners in Europe.

"I was asked to omit these references as being 'not in the public interest,'" Dr. Hueper recalled. "The delivery of my paper was made dependent on complying with this demand. Since I refused to be made a scientific liar by omission, I cancelled my talk as being censored. I have been told that someone in AEC asked then that I be dismissed."

When I interviewed him, Dr. Hueper told me, his occupational cancer work is "the smallest field of investigation" and he can't even hire assistants. I asked why. He smiled bitterly. "Political pressure by industry," he said.

"As soon as I retire," he went on, "in four years, when I am 70, my environmental cancer section will be closed up entirely. Evidently it's felt that my work can be carried on better by distributing it among other units—by men who have never contributed anything so far to occupational cancer.

"I have protested against this in a 40-page memorandum to Secretary Flemming [Arthur S. Flemming, then the federal secretary of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare] because I feel it is an injustice to the American people. I have told the sad story of environmental cancer in a 15-page survey which I sent to Dr. John R. Heller, head of the National Cancer Institute. What I would like to see is a large environmental cancer center, perhaps as part of the new Bureau of Environmental Health which the surgeon general recently proposed to Congress. Environmental cancer needs special experience and should be one of the major fields of investigation, if we are to protect the American people against cancer-producing agents."

His persistent efforts seemed to be making federal officials jittery. Not so long ago, Dr. Hueper was asked by a government man, "When are you moving?" The safety director of the United Mine Workers Union remarked to Dr. Hueper, "Anyone in your position must be prepared to change jobs frequently." But the stubborn scientist is standing pat.

For speaking out, Dr. Hueper says he has been further punished: His promotion to a higher grade has been rescinded and he remains merely a section chief.

Far more important than the personal penalties is industry's continuation of cancer hazards. That brought us to the blanket of silence spread over the hidden cancer story.

"Too many industrial doctors," he said, "can't freely report on the occurrences of cancer among workers under their care."

"Just how common is this?" I asked.

"It's quite prevalent. We know there are occupational cancers in other countries and we have the world's largest industrial setup. Yet, there have been scarcely any reports on such cases here. Industry has consistently refused publication of statistics [Continued on page 85]

Chapman, far from through, sent out flurries of appeals from his conviction on a whole catalogue of technicalities. But the State Court of Errors and Appeals, giving Gerald the brush, volunteered the comment that it had seldom in its experience seen a murder charge so clearly and conclusively proved.

While Gerald was sitting it out, thinking up a last-minute move, his old pal, Dutch, became an involuntary civic improvement in Muskegon, Michigan, when a detective, spotting him on the street, got into a gun duel with him. When they picked Dutch up he was dead in several places.

Connecticut paid Gerald Chapman the compliment of installing a new hanging machine—a contraption that jerked a man upward instead of dropping him through a trap—just in time for his involuntary departure. But Chapman was still not through.

Sweating it out in the death house, he master-minded an appeal to the United States Supreme Court, charging that his constitutional rights had been violated when he had been removed from Atlanta, prior to the completion of his sentence there, to stand trial in Connecticut. And damned if the highest court in the land didn't consider the argument. Finally, though, it said, "No."



ON THE JOB CANCER

Continued from page 55

on occupational cancer."

Then he ticked off the areas of silence: Until recently, millions of pounds of chemicals were used in dye industries. A pinch of the stuff has been proved to cause bladder cancer. Except for one brief report a few years ago, medical literature in the U.S. has no information on the occurrence and number of such cancers and the type of workers involved. Yet, Dr. Hueper contends, occupational bladder cancer among several hundred dye workers is on record in the files of chemical companies. "The medical director of one company," he added, "went out of his way to block presentation of such evidence before an international cancer congress by threatening me with prosecution for divulging company secrets. Later, he refused to let me enter any of his company's plants."

Although skin cancer has often appeared among paraffin pressers in U.S. oil refineries, no reports (except from Esso) have been issued for the past 30 years.

U.S. industry is silent on bladder cancer among rubber workers who use rubber anti-oxidants. One company knew of 38 cases of bladder tumors during the manufacture of the chemical, but did not publish the findings. Appearance of cancers in similar plants in England have been demonstrated.

Gerald was set to go at midnight on April 5, 1926, when he was in the 39th year of his life—a little over five years after he had first begun to have fun with the blondes in Gramercy Park. On the morning of that April day, he somehow wangled an unprecedented appearance before the six-man Connecticut Board of Pardons.

"Gentlemen," said Gerald, looking searchingly into each face, moistening his lips, choosing his words with ease, his voice lumpy with emotion, "you have a choice. You have the choice of setting me free from a crime I never committed—or you have the choice of knowing, to your dying days, that you refused to save the life of an innocent man."

Gerald now launched into the story of his misspent life and the psychological reasons behind it, always stressing the fact that he had never taken a human life. And then, at the end of more than an hour, he stood dramatically before the six stern-faced men, arms limp at his sides, a faint smile on his thin, purplish lips. "My life, then, gentlemen," Gerald concluded, "I now leave in your hands."

But it didn't work. At a few minutes past midnight that night, the brainiest criminal of modern times, wearing a conclusive rope around his neck, was jerked to his doom. •

We have no data from asbestos textile companies on lung cancer and asbestosis, a lung disease associated with cancer.

Among nickel refinery workers, a gag apparently has been placed on reports of cancers of the sinuses, nasal cavities and lung, although such cases have been found in Canada, Norway and England.

Coal tar cancers of the skin have been hushed up. Companies Dr. Hueper visited denied they had cases, but changed their minds when faced with state health department records.

Industry neglects to report skin or lung cancers developed by non-ferrous smelter workers and miners working with arsenic-containing oils.

I wanted to know why companies should want to suppress this vital information. Dr. Hueper pointed to a recent statement by Dr. Phillippe Shubik of the University of Chicago Medical School, who attributed the coverup to "fear of compensation and insurance claims that would arise."

As a further check on the Hueper-Smith accusations of cancer research sabotage, I called on the public-minded American Cancer Society. At its New York headquarters, I found this corroboration in the society's official publication:

"Some industries which have instituted studies of the problem (of environmental cancer) are not publishing data on the



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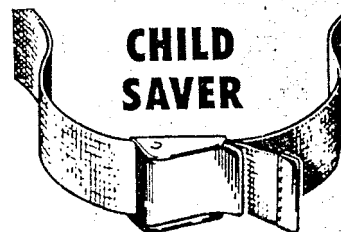
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GORDON FAWCETT,

Business Manager

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 30th day
of September, 1961.

(SEAL) LILLIAN M. KLEIN

(My commission expires April 1, 1963)

symptomology and epidemiology of can-
cers within their industries. Through
such secretiveness, the medical profession
is deprived of the benefit of factual
evidence which is essential for an in-
telligent approach to a preventive con-
trol of cancer by medical and tech-
nological procedures.

"In fact, some companies have taken
active steps to prevent the publication
of incriminating evidence obtained by
investigators in their several fields. A
few industrial concerns and certain in-
dustrial consultants have even gone to
the length of endeavoring to undermine
the professional standards of workers in
the field of occupational cancer."

There still remained two other scien-
tists mentioned by Drew Pearson. Dr.
Arthur Vorwald had been dropped as
director of the Saranac (N.Y.) Lab-
oratory when he described his discovery
that cancer of the lungs could stem from
a chemical dust. Checking, I discovered
that Dr. Vorwald is now with the Depart-
ment of Industrial Medicine at Wayne
University.

Finally, Dr. Robert Collier Page was
medical director of the Standard Oil
Company of New Jersey when he started
to study cancer-causing chemicals. Today,
Dr. Page, no longer medical director, has
the title of "consultant" with the com-
pany. Dr. Page labels the statement that
Standard Oil was opposed to his cancer
research as "entirely untrue." Then he
adds, "I am presently enjoying my ca-
pacity as a consultant to Jersey Stand-
ard."

What does all this muzzling of cancer
investigators and the hushing up of can-
cer cases mean to you? How important
are all these shenanigans in your life?

Primarily it may indicate that you're
not as protected as you should be against
the threats of cancer on your job. More
than 400 chemicals have been pin-
pointed as causing cancer and any of
them may affect you at your work or at
home.

Occupational cancer hits males pri-
marily, since more men than women
come in contact with industrial carcino-
gens. There's hardly a single industry
which, at some point, doesn't have one
or more carcinogens potentially danger-
ous to people handling them, unless the
right precautions are taken. They may
be dusts, gases, vapors, oils, tars, simple
metals or complex chemical compounds.

You have about one chance in four of
developing some form of cancer during
your lifetime. Most men in industry are
not at all aware that their job may
eventually give them the disease. Many
workers with tars and oils, for ex-
ample, ignore warty growths. They use
a sharp knife or razor blade to pare the
lesions themselves, though a surgical
biopsy may reveal skin cancer. Taking
one industry alone, among men in their
40s in some U.S. chromate plants there
are 325 times as many lung cancer cases
as in men of the same age in the general
population!

The fact that a man's job may be
responsible for his cancer was first re-
vealed almost 200 years ago when skin
cancers were found to be common in
chimney sweeps. This was traced to tar

that rubbed into their skin as they
climbed through chimneys. The same
kind of cancers can be produced in the
lab by rubbing coal tar into the skin of
animals.

From coal tar, a long line of car-
cinogens have been isolated. Some are so
powerful that a tiny crystal is enough to
induce cancer.

Chimney sweeps are gone, but many a
man has gotten skin cancer from han-
dling coal tar or its derivatives in present-
day occupations at gas works, where tar
is made; at coke ovens and tar dis-
tilleries; in jobs involving pitch or
creosote, paving roads, making briquettes,
water-proofing timber, fish nets or elec-
tric cables.

For centuries, a peculiar lung disease
has been rampant in miners of southern
Germany. This has been recognized as
lung cancer. The mines contain radio-
active gas.

During the last 30 years, a creeping
horror has pursued women employed in
a watch factory in the little town of
Ampere, New Jersey. Back in the '20s,
girls were hired to paint watch dials
with a luminous paint. The paint con-
tained a radium compound. To point
up a brush, the girls would twirl the tip
between their lips. Each time, they ab-
sorbed a tiny amount of radium, and it
settled in their bones. As the years have
gone by, one by one these girls have
developed cancer of the bones. Amputa-
tion, disfigurement or death was the re-
sult.

Today, radioactive materials are widely
used in industry as "tracers."

In Germany, Switzerland, England and
finally in the U.S., men who worked with
synthetic azo dyes came down with
bladder cancer. In some operations, 100
per cent of the workers were afflicted.
Even if a man worked only six months
in a dye plant, the cancer could appear
10 or 15 years later.

In Detroit, recently, two metal workers
quietly received a big out-of-court settle-
ment from their company because they
developed skin cancer from contact with
cutting oils. These oils, still used to cool
high-speed cutting machinery, are sprayed
on a worker's hands and face, as well as
inhaled. At one major auto plant,
workers are threatening to strike unless
safer cutting oil is provided. In some
cases, outbreaks of the disease have been
called "spontaneous cancer," though
they were suspected as being due to the
oils.

Several months ago, an Ohio state
health officer, in a study utilizing death
certificates and Social Security records,
was able to uncover a high death rate of
bladder cancer among workers in a
chemical company exposed to benzadine
and beta-naphthylamine. Although these
chemicals were conceded by company
officials to be cancer hazards, and nine
living plant employees were awarded
compensation, the poisons are still used.

These are only a few instances of
what has happened—and is happening—
in plants throughout the nation. How
vulnerable are you?

Occupational cancer can occur a year

after exposure or many years later. It depends on the intensity of the exposure, the potency of the chemical or physical agent and how susceptible you are. It's possible for a cancer to show up years after you've left a job where you had contact with a carcinogen.

Specifically, a number of jobs today tend to expose workers to such risks. For instance, several studies by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company indicate that higher than average death rates from lung cancer appear among copper-smiths and tinsmiths, painters and varnishers, roofers and slaters. Other studies point to the following occupations as harboring cancer-causing elements:

- Asbestos workers.
- Stokers of coke ovens.
- Men who breathe in chromium-containing compounds.
- Hot-metal workers.
- Men who make or handle arsenical pesticides used in sprays or dusts.
- Refinery workers having contact with nickel dust and nickel carbonyl vapors.
- Men exposed to excessive fumes of gasoline, oil or varnish.
- Producers and handlers of certain aromatic amines (compounds derived from ammonia) whose derivatives are used in making rubber and dyes.
- Workers who produce tar paper and asphalt shingles.
- Men engaged in mining and smelting of copper, zinc and silver ores who are exposed to arsenicals.
- Workers exposed to certain petroleum mists and fogs, or vapors from isopropyl oil.

The 400 different substances pegged as carcinogens generally attack specific organs of the body, such as the following:

Skin Cancer, which comprises three out of four cases of the occupational disease: The culprits include arsenic, asphalt, creosote, crude paraffin oil, pitch, X-rays and ultraviolet rays. In the oil industry, high boiling fractions of petroleum and petroleum products, shale oil, coal tar and related compounds are established inciters of skin cancer.

Bladder Cancer, which covers about 15 per cent of occupational tumors: Aromatic amines (beta-naphthylamine and benzidine) used in making synthetic dyes are absorbed into the body, probably by inhalation. The exposure of only a few micrograms of beta-naphthylamine a day continued for several months may be enough to produce bladder cancer in some men. Hundreds of these cases were found in United States dye plants. Recently, bladder cancer has emerged as a hazard for men making automobile tires, apparently as result of a chemical used to treat the rubber.

Lung Cancer: Fumes from anthracene oil, asbestos, chromates, nickel carbonyl and coal tar; radioactive substances.

Leukemia, the malignant disease of blood-forming tissues such as the spleen, lymph nodes and bone marrow: Benzene, X-rays, radium.

Cancer of sinuses and nose (nasopharynx): Nickel carbonyl, isopropyl oil, radioactive dusts and gases. In the manufacture of products from propylene gas there seems to be a large number of such cancer cases.

Bone Cancer: Radium and radioactive products.

Just how do these deadly agents produce cancer? They act in different ways. Some carcinogens, like tar and mineral oils, cause the disease directly. Others, like the azo dyes, act indirectly, probably evoking metabolic disturbances in certain organs such as the liver which in turn result in cancers being produced within the body.

For example, among men working in nickel refining, nose and lung cancers are traced to nickel carbonyl, a gas at ordinary temperatures. On contact with water, nickel carbonyl decomposes to finely divided nickel and carbon monoxide. Hence it is presumed that in the moist body cavities (sinuses, lungs) into which it is breathed, the tissues are actually exposed to finely divided nickel.

In its early stage, it's hard to spot this cancer because so many men suffer from chronic sinusitis. By the time the cancer is discovered, it often has invaded the bone. Then, chances of survival are poor. In one study of cancer in a nickel-refining plant, 90 out of 93 cases ended in death.

Surprisingly, the same sort of nasal sinus cancers have turned up in men working on a wholly different job, making isopropyl oil.

Not long ago, during Dr. Smith's visit to a shale-oil plant which processes gasoline, paraffin, diesel oil and other products, he examined employees working in the paraffin process. Several had dull red, brownish or purple splotches on their forearms. One man, who had had two cancers removed from his arm, showed four "horns" on his hands and a suspiciously firm mound on the skin at his wrist. Many red, conical "paraffin warts" were on his legs and arms. Evidently, if the skin trouble among these workers was allowed to become chronic, cancer broke out.

To industrial leaders, the whole problem of cancer-causing hazards on the job is a big headache. Obviously, no one would want to expose people carelessly to chemicals they honestly thought would induce cancer. The problem is that management's thinking is often about 100 years behind the times. It took a long while for people to realize that a few bacteria can enter the body, multiply and produce disease. Today, we're in the same position in regard to the more subtle, delayed-action carcinogens. Many persons are not only apathetic about it but reluctant to believe chemical molecules can enter the body, stimulate a body cell to multiply and—as that cell and its descendants go on multiplying—eventually produce a mass of cells that we call cancer. But that is what happens.

Very few industries have made studies of carcinogens in their manufacturing processes and published the results.

In one California plant, a serious lung disease was known to exist for 20 years. No effective dust-control measures were adopted until the International Chemical



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Workers Union called a strike to obtain
safe working conditions—to protect their
lives.

The behind-the-times attitude of in-
dustrial management is illustrated by
the experience of a state health official
who recently visited a small asphalt plant
which had a known carcinogen hazard.

"You ought to improve your ventilat-
ing system and set up other safeguards
for your workers," the official urged the
owner of the plant.

"That's nonsense," was the reply. "I've
been working with asphalt for twenty-
two years and no one is going to tell me
it's dangerous."

Later, the official reported that he
could clearly see half a dozen wart-like
growths on the owner's face and hands.
The warts were the kind that are often
pre-cancerous. And growing just above
the owner's cheek bone was an actual
cancer the size of a dime!

These tumors had developed so slowly
and insidiously that the man had paid
no attention to them.

How can your job be made safer, if
you're in one of the vulnerable indus-
tries? Fortunately, the outlook for re-
ducing cancer in industry is more hope-
ful than it is for the general public,
because exposure to specific carcinogens
can be controlled. These are some of the
important ways of preventing occupa-
tional cancer:

1. Substitute, where possible, a safe
substance or process for a harmful one.
2. Introduce a production system to
prevent escape of noxious dusts, fumes,
vapors and gases into the air. Good ex-
haust ventilation is essential wherever
such hazards exist. Sometimes a dry
method of releasing dust can be changed
to a wet technique that creates no dust.
3. If carcinogens can't be eliminated,
the time and degree of exposure to them
should be reduced as much as possible.
4. Protective clothing, goggles, gloves
and respirators should be used by workers
in jeopardy. It's wise to have separate
lockers for work and street clothes. Prefer-
ably, work clothes should be changed
daily. Another good safeguard is to
shower at the end of the day.
5. Workers should be carefully in-
structed to avoid unnecessary contact
with the carcinogens they handle.
6. Periodic medical examinations of
workers must be made to detect early
signs of cancer.
7. All industrial plants using cancer-
inducing materials should be licensed
by the state or federal government and
regular inspections made of plant con-
trol methods.

It's good to know that a number of
big companies are alive to the perils and
have taken steps to shield their workers.
Monsanto Chemical Company stopped
making a new chemical after it was
proved to cause bladder cancers in dogs.
Union Carbide and Carbon Company
made technical changes to cut out hazards
leading to cancer in the sinuses of men
working on production of isopropyl
alcohol. The Mutual Chemical Company
built new plants to reduce dangers to
chromate workers. Several asbestos manu-
facturers have improved their processes
to cut down dust and decrease the chances

of their men contracting asbestosis, a
lung disease associated with cancer.

One oil company tested hundreds of
petroleum derivatives on thousands of
mice. The experiment disclosed which de-
rivatives would cause cancer and which
did not. With the information supplied
by the mice, the company swung into ac-
tion to protect men from products which
showed a cancer risk.

Pipes carrying carcinogenic products
were painted a distinctive color. Re-
fineries were rebuilt to concentrate the
dangerous lines in one area. Men work-
ing there were instructed in the risk.
Protective clothing and washing facilities
were provided, and foremen saw to it
that the men used these facilities.
Through further tests on mice, products
distributed to consumers were carefully
checked for safety.

This program is unique in the annals
of industrial medicine. Most of the
material tested came from new processes.
No one knew whether or not they would
bring about cancer in humans. The mice
provided information to head off occupa-
tional cancer *before it happened!*

Such foresight is rare. Many companies
are doing little or nothing about the
hidden menace. Why should industry
drag its feet? The answer is that protec-
tive measures can be expensive.

New carcinogens are being discovered
from time to time, especially in radio-
active materials. Important industries
using cancer-inducing agents are ex-
panding—dye plants and processors of
various forms of hydrocarbons, metals
and solvents. Procedures involving new
types of exposure are constantly being
developed.

Thus occupational cancer has become
one of the ominous end-products of the
technological world in which we work.

If cancer arose suddenly after exposure
to one or another chemical, it would be
easy to spot the relationship. But it comes
on very, very slowly. Ten or 20 years can
go by between the first exposure and the
eventual appearance of cancer. Mean-
time, a man may have handled hundreds
of different chemicals, changed his job
within his industry or gone on to another
industry.

Tracking down chemical causes of
cancer is a tough job, but, with the
booming expansion of chemical indus-
tries, it is a job that must be done.
It will need the close teamwork of man-
agement, labor, government and cancer
researchers.

When I discussed this with Bill Smith,
he was confident it can be done.

"Tars, oils, metals and many other
substances that can cause cancer are
necessary and important in industry," he
said. "Learning to handle them safely is
not really different from learning to
handle acids, explosives or other danger-
ous, but necessary, chemicals."

Scientists like Dr. Smith and Dr.
Hueper, even though they are attacked
as "trouble makers," must be permitted
to explore the mysteries of carcinogens
without hindrance and to reveal their
findings. Only then can you be safe on
your job from the ravages of cancer. •