

FILE NAME: Newspaper & Magazine Articles (NMA)

DATE: 1975 Mar 20

DOC#: NMA016

DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: The Montreal Star - Asbestos Clinic Let Sick Men Work

Asbestos clinic let sick men work

By JOSH FREED
Star Staff Reporter

THETFORD MINES — Doctors who operated a clinic for the asbestos companies here have admitted they did not always inform workers suffering from asbestosis of the full extent of their illness.

In addition, they often permitted these employees to continue working

in areas dangerous to their health rather than referring them to the Workmen's Compensation Board.

The clinic records were subject to government inspection but, until 1972, the inspector was Dr. Paul Cartier, the same man employed by the companies from 1949 until last year to head their clinic.

Cartier yesterday told The

MONTREAL STAR he had permitted sick workers to remain in the mines and mills years after he had observed symptoms of asbestosis "because the men didn't want to be reported ill and be transferred to lower paying jobs."

Cartier said he did this because he thought "it was in the best interest of the workers" and was not, as union

leaders have claimed, told to do it by his employers in order to save them compensation settlements.

The companies also deny any collusion. W. W. Oughtred, president of Asbestos Corp., largest of the four Thetford Mines asbestos companies, says he knew "little or nothing of how the clinic operated."

"We just set up the clinic because

the government asked us to, but we stayed at arm's distance from it and never interfered with its operation. We just paid the bills."

Had the sick men been sent to the compensation board and awarded disability payments, the companies would have been required to pay lump sum premiums to the government of between \$5,000 and \$75,000

for each worker, depending on age and degree of disability.

At present, 345 Thetford Mines workers are receiving compensation for asbestos-related diseases. According to figures supplied by the Confederation of National Trade Unions and The Quebec Federation of Labor, the two labor organizations to which had

See M27, Page A-3

Chief doctor says he tried 'to be human'

By CLAUDE ARPIN

The central figure in the current controversy surrounding health hazards faced by asbestos workers in Thetford Mines is a 67-year-old doctor whose policy was "to do as much good for the workers as possible without harming them."

Paul Cartier, who operated on this principle when director of the companies' clinic which checked workers for possible asbestos-related lung ailments, admits he did not insist that affected workers leave their jobs and seek workman's compensation benefits.

Dr. Cartier, who ran the clinic from 1949 until last year, says he "tried to do my best to be human."

"When a worker came to me and I saw from his x-rays that he had slight abnormalities in his lungs I



says he tried 'to be human'

By CLAUDE ARPIN

The central figure in the current controversy surrounding health hazards faced by asbestos workers in Thetford Mines is a 67-year-old doctor whose policy was "to do as much good for the workers as possible without harming them."

Paul Cartier, who operated on this principle when director of the companies' clinic which checked workers for possible asbestos-related lung ailments, admits he did not insist that affected workers leave their jobs and seek workman's compensation benefits.

Dr. Cartier, who ran the clinic from 1949 until last year, says he "tried to do my best to be human."

"When a worker came to me and I saw from his x-rays that he had slight abnormalities in his lungs, I told him, in an effort to be as humanitarian as possible: 'Look, you've got the slight beginnings of a lung problem. Now, are you happy at your job? Do you want to stay there? Or do you wish to apply for compensation and be transferred elsewhere in the plant? If you stay where you are, it won't affect your condition that much and if you become incapacitated you can always apply for compensation then.'"

"Even if they had left their work completely and gone on to drive cabs, for instance, it might not have arrested the progressive effects of asbestosis."

"So I figured it was in their best interests to stay at their jobs. Besides, they didn't want to be reported ill and transferred to a lower-paying job where they might have earned as much as \$50 less a week."

"And if I had reported them ill and brought about their transfer to lower-paying jobs, the unions would have lodged grievances and the workers would have been reinstated to their former jobs anyway."

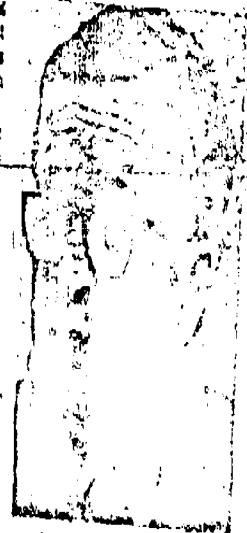
Cartier says it is "still debatable" whether asbestosis would have subsided in a patient who was removed from an asbestos polluted environment the minute the disease was diagnosed.

"From what modern medicine knows about the disease, there appears to be a slight progression even after contact with asbestos fibres has ceased."

He admits there were "a few unfortunate incidents" involving workers who died a few months after receiving a clean bill of health from his clinic.

"But most of these deaths seemed to be the result of heart problems, which may or may not have been connected to lung ailments."

Cartier says, however, that when a



Dr. Paul Cartier

Rail, grain move again after strike settlement

Canadian Press

The rail was moving normally around the country today but an enormous backlog of export grain remained to be loaded following a tentative settlement of the wage dispute that brought on more than a month of revolving strikes.

While first reaction to last night's settlement was mixed among union members, a survey across the country today indicated that generally members of the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) were back on the job.

However in Thunder Bay the 100 grain weighmen and trimmers voted unanimously to reject the tentative contract settlement and will continue their strike at the Thunder Bay terminals.

The post office also faced another "though lesser" problem in a call to "ban the postal code card" called today. But a departmental spokesman said this was not expected to result

BOY STREET IT IS! Three-year-old Chantal Marcott of St. Chrysostome had her first taste of maple syrup yesterday and, oh boy, what a reaction. The sap is flowing fast in the rural areas around Montreal and staff photographer Ron

Yull took a trip yesterday to capture the flavours on film. As well, new technology is coming to the aid of the maple syrup farmer — buckets are going out and plastic hoses are coming in. The pictures and story on Page C1

Brooklyn woman refuses kind offers

Quiet dignity unmarred by loss

By TREVOR ROWE

Jennifer Perril has lost her life savings of \$1,750 but she hasn't lost her quiet dignity.

The 35-year-old Brooklyn, N.Y., woman came to Montreal Sunday to visit her sister whose husband had recently died. She planned to give her sister the money to help pay funeral expenses.

But she lost the money when she left it in a taxi she had taken from the bus station on Berri street to her sister's apartment at 4650 Hamoudan Ave. off Côte des Neiges.

She has offered a \$500 reward for the return of her purse which, along with the money, contained her citizenship papers and keys to her Brooklyn apartment. So far she has heard nothing.

She said that she still worries about having lost the money and though she realizes she shouldn't, she just can't help it.

In response to an article in THE MONTREAL STAR, she has been contacted by several individuals and organizations who volunteered both fi-

nancial aid and sympathetic advice. However, though she and her sister, Rose Lermovitch, are ill, she has declined all offers of financial assistance.

"People offered me money, good people in Montreal, but I refused it. I've never wanted anything from anybody, I just wanted to support myself," she said.

"I've been a widow for 40 years but I never wanted anybody to do a favour for me when I could work and pay my way. I live alone in a one-

room apartment in New York and whatever I've got is good enough."

"I have a small government pension and I'll make do, or I'll make it do. Maybe it's just that I'm so selfish that I don't want any help."

Though she is unwilling to accept help she is always willing to give it, especially to her widowed sister.

"When you get older you need each other and have to help each other. Right now both of us are ill, we're two broken up people, but what little we have is good enough."

Hearings to be held

Inside Today's Star

Taxi fare increase proposed

By YEREMEE MOORE

Star Staff Reporter

QUEBEC — The provincial government yesterday proposed a considerable increase in the drop rate and mileage charges of Montreal taxis.

The proposal, however, is subject to hearings and a ruling by the

Berthiaume explained that rates were already set at the maximum in many regions and that general inflation justified higher ceilings.

The provincial cabinet by the regulation sets the range of permissible taxi rates for different areas of the province in order "to protect the pu-

lic interest," said Berthiaume.

The transport commission could not be given complete latitude in setting taxi rates because its basic task is "strictly to liberalize."

The draft regulation will be a sub-

See TAXI, Page A-3

POLICE INQUIRY: The Quebec Police Commission inquiry into the conduct of MUC Deputy Police Director André Gosselin will be reopened by April 13, Page A-4.

LABOR PROTEST: Speaker Jean-Noël Lavigne says he will investigate charges that union leaders were denied access to the national assembly during a demonstration. Page

Quebec Transport Commission 10 am.

See DOCTOR, Page A-4

Men at one mine stopped going to clinic

Continued from Page A-1

Asbestos workers' unions are affiliated, 20 of these people were referred to the compensation board by union personnel.

It is impossible to determine whether the remaining 45 people were sent by the clinic or went on their own, as the clinic claims it has no referral figures.

The union says the workers they referred who were awarded compensation had all been classified A in their annual checkups at the company clinic. This led the CNTU to partially finance a two-year study by a team from New York's Mount Sinai Medical School which said in the report that 61 per cent of 1,200 asbestos workers in Thetford Mines had more than 50 years' experience. About 10 per cent were found to have asbestosis.

Donald Haight, a Canadian doctor who collaborated on the study, told The Star he was "struck by some of the people classified not sick by the clinic."

"I found some people I considered to be in very serious condition who told me that only months before they had been classified A by the company clinic."

Union files

Unions began to compile files on compensation in 1968. Included in the files at the time the Mount Sinai team was called in were the following cases:

A worker received a 75-per-cent

disability compensation two years ago, despite an A in his clinic medical. The man died six months later and an autopsy revealed the cause of death was asbestosis.

Another man received an A in his company medical in January, 1970, and died in October, 1970. An autopsy revealed death from advanced asbestosis.

A total of twenty-eight deaths were attributed to asbestosis or asbestos-related diseases since 1968 by autopsy reports. Many men in these cases had never been told to apply for compensation. (Until two years ago deaths from lung cancer, known to increase in frequency with exposure to asbestos, were not included among asbestos-related deaths.)

A union spokesman said workers at Carey Canadian Mine, 15 miles from Thetford Mines, had lost confidence in the company's clinic and had begun to go for checkups infrequently, despite a government regulation requiring annual visits. Last year, Carey Canadian workers stopped attending the clinic altogether, and went instead to the Thetford Mines hospital.

Nicolas Paquet, president of the CNTU-affiliated union at that company, said the policy was initiated by company president Michael Press who told him they should "pull out" of the clinic. Press refused to comment when approached by The Star.

The clinic was set up by Thetford Mines asbestos companies more than 30 years ago in response to a 1938 government order in council demanding annual checkups for all asbestos

workers. Since Carey Canadian withdrew last year, the clinic has been administered by executives of the other three asbestos companies in the area: Asbestos Corp., Bell Asbestos and Lake Asbestos.

Until last year when he relinquished his job as director and became a consultant, Cartier ran the clinic. The only other doctor working with him was Dr. Jacques Dussault, who joined the staff 17 years ago.

Dussault agrees with Cartier's version of how the clinic operated, but says he was not in agreement with it. "I wanted to tell the worker everything and send him to compensation, but Cartier was the boss and I stood by his decision."

"I did what I could. If I felt a man was sick, I told him and suggested he see his family doctor."

"Perhaps I wasn't severe enough in explaining the seriousness of the disease. But most of them didn't want to go to compensation — they knew there weren't very many jobs outside the mine and there was no guarantee the company could find them another job if they were removed from their present ones."

"They said that they would like to go to compensation if I could give them another job where there was no asbestos dust. I explained that all I could do was classify them as sick, but I couldn't give them another job. It wasn't my department."

"So most of them never went — they were frightened they'd lose their jobs and have no way of making a living."

Union officials also say a lack of

job security deterred most men from seeking compensation.

Laurent Gosselin, vice-president of the CNTU-affiliated union at Asbestos Corp., said "Asbestos workers have absolutely no guarantee of work if they're removed from the mills or mines for asbestosis."

"There just aren't available jobs outside the mine or mill — so the guy who's sick has to choose between his health and the ability to support his family. That's no choice."

"A guy of 55, trained in one occupation, is scared stiff of losing his job, so even if someone tells him he's a little sick, he sometimes doesn't have the guts to admit it and take the chance. If these doctors really wanted to help the workers, why didn't they at least tell the union or the companies that there were sick people going back to work?"

Dussault claims that on several occasions he discussed the problem of whether or not to remove sick men from the job with company representatives, whom he refused to name, but "nothing ever came of it."

Unaware

Oughtred said he was unaware that workers were not seeking compensation for fear of losing their jobs.

"I'm not sure," he said, "but I believe we have a clause in the contract that guarantees them a job in the event they have to leave their job because of dust conditions."

Union spokesmen deny this, saying it is one of the clauses they are now striving to obtain.

Oughtred says he knew that a large number of people were receiv-

ing compensation despite being given clean bills of health by Cartier but he believed this was happening "because of changing standards at the compensation board."

"It's more like a welfare system now than like workers' compensation. Older miners put in claims before they retire and get it automatically — everybody gets 10 per cent. But I've never met anybody who said he had asbestosis."

Thetford Mines CNTU council president Oliver Lemay said this is not the case. He said 70 of the 251 people his union have referred to the board in the last seven years have been refused compensation.

Paul Filleau, secretary-general of the Quebec Asbestos Mining Association in which all four employers belong while stating that the association was in no way responsible for the clinic, said some company officials were long aware of Cartier's practice of "keeping certain information on workers' health to himself."

"If you tell a 55-year-old man he's really sick, you may do him more harm psychologically than good physically. It's a difficult decision... and company officials tell they shouldn't interfere."

"Cartier told the workers they were all right, let them go back to their jobs and, if he thought the case serious, recommended that they visit their family doctor."

"But the companies never told him to do this — it was his decision. We never interfered."

Nor did the Quebec government intervene. The government had estab-

lished a system of inspection (Regulation 197 of the Quebec Mining Act) which required a government inspector "to examine company clinic medical records and issue annual miner's certificates to those with healthy lungs."

However, because they appointed Cartier to that job for Eastern Quebec regions including Gaspé, Quebec City and Thetford Mines, Cartier was in effect examining his own work.

When he examined workers, he was a company doctor; then he would "change hats" and examine their test results as a government representative, deciding which workers would receive their miner's certificates and which would be denied them and subsequently recommended for compensation.

Cartier continued to hold these conflicting posts until 1972 at which time, according to Dr. Bertrand Bellemare, a long-time workers' compensation commissioner, he was replaced by Philippe Duval, because "it was not really proper that a company man should work for the government."

"But at the time he was first employed, there was nothing incorrect," Bellemare maintained. "The government needed a good pneumologist and he (Cartier) had an international reputation."

Despite his replacement, Cartier continued to act as a consultant in reading X-rays for the government until last year. He was replaced as head of the Thetford Mines company clinic last year when Dr. Michel Lesage became responsible for it.

CIA

Continued from Page A-1

Employees, the NSA has helped in some defense department agencies, which use unimproved services to intercept broadcasts.

The U.S. air force security service, the army security agency and the navy security group have up to 10,000 employees at monitoring posts around the world, listening through headphones and analyzing foreign radio traffic.

The U.S. military rather than the CIA may have been involved in three coded salvage operations reported last night by the National Broadcast Company. They were:

- The recovery, with British help, of an electronic gear from a Soviet plane that crashed in the North Sea five years ago.
- The recovery of a Soviet submarine

Doctor felt it best for men to stay on job

Continued from Page A-1

person his an asbestos-related lung ailment, the right ventricle of his heart, which operates in conjunction with the lungs, has to work overtime and this could lead to a fatal enlargement of the ventricle.

"But it is so hard to show a direct relationship between the two things (disease and heart failure) that Montreal's top top pathologists refuse systematically to perform autopsies on this type of death because they know they can't prove the relationship in the event of a court case."

While Cartier freely admits he acquiesced to workers' wishes to remain

at their jobs in spite of the hazards, he vehemently denies any collusion between himself and the mining companies which paid his salary and for the upkeep of the clinic.

"I can swear that I was never given any directives by the companies and that I acted solely on the basis of my extensive training in some of the world's leading medical centres."

Union claims that Cartier was reluctant to refer workers to the Workers' Compensation Board because the companies didn't want to pay lump sum compensation premiums are "totally false," he says.

"I worked on the principle that if the worker showed a slight trace of

asbestosis I warned him about it and let him decide if he wanted to remain at his job."

"My policy was to try and do as much good for him as was possible without causing him any harm."

"I was acting on behalf of the worker who was worried about losing income. I wasn't doing it for pecuniary rewards from the companies. I've never been one to go in for that sort of thing. I worked myself through medical school by keeping a job at the post office from 4 p.m. to 5 a.m. every day."

"But no matter what I say, people are still going to think that I had sold out to the companies. I just tried to do my best."

found nothing to complain about, so who was I to add my two cents worth."

"I guess I was too timid. I should have spoken out. My friends have always told me that. I'm too timid."

Cartier remains sceptical, however, about the validity of the recent Mount Sinai study which found a very high incidence of lung disease among veteran Thetford Mines workers.

He says that during contract negotiations which led to the violent and bitter asbestos strike of 1969, the unions sought to dramatize their demands by trying to establish a link between asbestos mining and tuberculosis.

Asbestos

safety to be tightened

The Miner's Quarantine Bureau

QUEBEC — Tougher inspection and miller fines will be introduced early this year to control conditions hazardous to Quebec asbestos miners, Miller and Natural Resources Minister Gilles Bisson announced yesterday.

But the minister told the national assembly the existing air pollution standards would remain in force.

Union files

Union began to compile files on compensation in 1978. Included in the files at the time the Mount team was called in were the following cases:

• A worker received a 75-per-cent

increase in pay. The company refused to pay the increase. The union filed a claim with the National Labor Relations Board.

The union was set up by the Ford Motor asbestos companies more than 30 years ago in response to a 1933 government order in council demanding annual checkups for all asbestos

workers. The company refused to pay the increase. The union filed a claim with the National Labor Relations Board.

"So most of them never went — they were frightened they'd lose their jobs and have no way of making a living."

Union officials also say a lack of

before we have a clause in the contract that guarantees them a job in the event they have to leave their job because of that condition."

Union spokesmen deny this saying it is one of the claims they are now striving to obtain.

Oughtred says he knew that a large number of people were receiv-

ing all right, let them go back to their jobs and, if he thought the data showed, recommended that they visit their family doctor.

"But the companies never told him to do this — it was his decision. He never interfered."

Nor did the Quebec government interfere. The government had estab-

lished a good working relationship and he (Cartier) had an international reputation.

Despite his replacement, Cartier continued to act as a consultant in reading X-rays for the government until last year. He was replaced by head of the Montreal Mines company clinic last year when Dr. Michel Lesage became responsible for it.

CIA

Continued from Page A-1

Employees, the NSA has help from civilian department agencies, such as uniformed servicemen to intercept broadcasts.

The U.S. air force security service, the army security agency and navy security group have up to 2,000 employees at monitoring posts around the world, listening through microphones and analyzing foreign military radio traffic.

The U.S. military rather than the A may have been involved in three secret salvage operations reported recently by the National Broadcast Company. They were:

- The recovery, with British help, of electronic gear from a Soviet plane that crashed in the North Sea five years ago.
- The recovery of electronic listening devices from a Soviet vessel that sank in the Sea of Japan four years ago.
- The recovery of a nuclear weapon from a Soviet plane that crashed in the Sea of Japan five years ago.

QE 2 cruise boosts Canard

LOS ANGELES (Reader) — A financially successful world cruise by Canard liner Queen Elizabeth II made the morning British line leader for the first time in many years. Canard managing-director

Michael said yesterday. Queen Elizabeth II was the first of the line's ships to visit the United States west coast. It ended its 10-day world cruise, "Canard" paid up to \$100,000 for ship's most expensive mile on the 10 countries. An average haul for QE2 is a couple, Mitchell said.

Doctor felt it best for men to stay on job Asbestos safety to be tightened

Continued from Page A-1

person like an asbestos-related lung ailment, the right ventricle of his heart, which operates in conjunction with the lungs, has to work overtime and this could lead to a fatal enlargement of the ventricle.

"But it is so hard to show a direct relationship between the two lung diseases and heart failure that Montreal's top top pathologists refuse systematically to perform autopsies on this type of death because they know they can't prove the relationship in the event of a court case."

While Cartier freely admits he acquiesced to workers' wishes to remain

at their jobs in spite of the hazards, he vehemently denies any collusion between himself and the mining companies which paid his salary and for the upkeep of the clinic.

"I can swear that I was never given any directives by the companies and that I acted solely on the basis of my extensive training in some of the world's leading medical centres."

Union claims that Cartier was reluctant to refer workers to the Workmen's Compensation Board because the companies didn't want to pay lump sum compensation premiums are "totally false," he says.

"I worked on the principle that if the worker showed a slight trace of

asbestos," I warned him about it and let him decide if he wanted to remain at his job."

"My policy was to try and do as much good for him as was possible without causing him any harm."

"I was acting on behalf of the worker who was worried about losing income. I wasn't doing it for pecuniary rewards from the companies. I've never been one to go in for that sort of thing. I worked myself through medical school by keeping a job at the post office from 6 p.m. to 3 a.m. every day."

"But no matter what I say, people are still going to think that I had sold out to the companies. I just tried to do my best."

Cartier says that throughout his career at the clinic he was under the impression that if the condition of workers was being made worse by their continued exposure to asbestos fibres this fact would have been brought to his attention by the Quebec Asbestos Mining Association.

"The association was however financing costly research projects, and impressive medical teams visited my clinic from leading hospitals in Montreal, New York, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh."

"I would have made recommendations for improving working conditions but I was hampered by those big-name teams which spent up to two months at a time here."

"They spent an enormous amount of money and I figured that if there was anything wrong with our operation they would have made recommendations to the companies."

"When they came I reproached them on the fact that they didn't seem to follow up their tests with recommendations for improving working conditions."

"They could have made a great contribution with all their up-to-date expertise. They were in a better position than our little clinic which was isolated from medical centres. I thought they would recommend improvements to the industry but they never seemed to do it."

"I was open to recommendations. But it was embarrassing for a little French-Canadian doctor in the back-docks like me to come along after all those big shots and tell the industry to make improvements."

"The companies would surely have told me to mind my own business, that the leading world experts had

found nothing to complain about, so who was I to kiss my two cents worth."

"I guess I was too timid; I should have spoken out. My friends have always told me that I'm too timid."

Cartier remains sceptical, however, about the validity of the recent Mount Sinai study which found a very high incidence of lung disease among veteran Montreal Mines workers.

He says that during contract negotiations which led to the violent and bitter asbestos strike of 1978, the unions sought to dramatize their demands by trying to establish a link between asbestos mining and tuberculosis. The asbestos workers now are on strike for the first time since 1902 and safety clauses are among their chief demands.

"Today, the same thing is true and in order to make their point that mining asbestos leads to asbestos, they commissioned Dr. Irving Selikoff of the Mount Sinai College of Medicine in New York to study the situation here."

"Now, it is common knowledge in our field that Selikoff finds 100 per cent more abnormalities in lung X-rays than anyone else."

"When you read X-rays — and I used to read 10,000 a year in my day — you can over-read, under-read or arrive at a happy medium."

"Selikoff over-reads and the unions knew that and that's why they went after him."

Cartier says that by over-reading, any doctor can look at X-rays of the lungs of persons over age 50 in any line of work and discover "all sorts of abnormalities."

'Clinic revamped,' says new chief

By JOSH FREED
Star Staff Reporter

THEFTFORD MINES — The asbestos companies' clinic here has been revamped, says Dr. Michel Lesage, the man responsible for the clinic since April, 1971.

Lesage, filling the newly created post of company "medical advisor," is a doctor, lawyer and radiologist whose most recent position was advisor to the ministry of social affairs. Lesage has hired a new physician,

prevention as well. He says the Montreal Mines companies have spent \$20 million on ventilation alone in the last five years, but adds "it is not enough" in light of the latest test results.

The Montreal Star

Home Delivery Rates
Metropolitan Montreal (in most areas)
Monday to Saturday — \$1.00
SUNDAY — .50

The weather

Rain could go away

The temperatures

Plain, rain goes away... and maybe it will. We can expect cloud and precipitation to leave our region overnight, leaving us with fair weather tomorrow and the prospects for a wet week. Skies will be partly cloudy tomorrow, the cloud clearing through the day. Temperatures will be a bit warmer, and the sun should show pretty strongly during the day. Low tonight will be 24 (°C). High tomorrow, we predict 31 (°C).

Overnight low temperatures and yesterday's high. Barometer — 1013.5 (Celsius equivalent).

	Miles	Max	Min	Max	Min
Montreal (Durrill)	17(1)	21(3)	13(1)	21(3)	13(1)
Quebec	57(3)	21(3)	13(1)	21(3)	13(1)
Ottawa	21(3)	21(3)	13(1)	21(3)	13(1)
Minneapolis	34	21	13	21	13
Chicago	34	21	13	21	13
Detroit	34	21	13	21	13
Buffalo	34	21	13	21	13

Agreement