

asbestos industry, which led to the appointment, by the Quebec Provincial Government, of the 'Comité d'étude sur la salubrité dans l'industrie de l'amiante' of which Judge Beaudry was president.

The incidence of asbestos disease is under-recorded

The study at the mines and mills in Thetford, Quebec Province,³ is important because exposure was only to chrysotile, yet 697 or 60% of 1161 workers were found to have abnormal X-rays. 49% of non-smokers and 46% of those who had worked where dust counts were lowest, as in open pits above ground, were also found to be affected. 63.5% of smokers and 76% of those working in very dusty conditions had abnormal X-rays. A mortality study reported excess deaths from lung cancer. 585 of 714 workers found in 1974 to be affected, had not been advised of their condition by the mines clinic doctor, Dr Paul Cartier.

Dr Cartier, who resigned in 1974, had also been the government inspector for the area for a number of years. He has published that he 'considers that asbestosis can be tolerated quite well for many years' and the problem will remain unnecessarily serious for many years to come if a 'too scientific medical concept' is accepted. Others share his views. Professor P.C. Elmes, Director of the Medical Research Council Pneumoconiosis Unit, Penarth, wrote in 1976, 'As it is unusual at the present time to detect asbestosis in workers under the age of 50, it is evident that asbestosis may coincide with other disabilities leading to the necessity for light work and retirement at the age of say 60. Life may not be appreciably shortened and death from unrelated disease is common'. I deplore such callous indifference to the suffering caused by asbestos.

The Mount Sinai study at Thetford which proves conclusively that chrysotile is dangerous, has not been publicised in this country. In reply to a Parliamentary Question, the Chairman of the Health and Safety Commission has stated that a physician from our Employment Medical Advisory Service attended the clinical examination at the Thetford Mines in 1974 but made no report on the visit⁴.

Although it is argued that chrysotile cannot penetrate to the pleura to cause mesothelioma, French researchers investigating cases of mesothelioma have identified fibrils of chrysotile in pleural plaques and near the surface of the lung⁵. Mesothelioma has been diagnosed amongst chrysotile miners and their families, yet it is still claimed that the health records of the Canadian chrysotile miners show that chrysotile is safe.

DHSS Cancer Epidemiology and Clinical Trials Unit

Further evidence of the dangers of chrysotile is provided by studies^{6, 7} carried out at Turner and Newall, Rochdale, by the DHSS Cancer Epidemiology and Clinical Trials Unit at Oxford University. Parliamentary Questions have been unable to obtain details of these studies⁴. However, the American National Institute of Occupational Safety & Health (NIOSH)⁵ quotes these studies as reporting an increased risk of

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