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November 9, 1967

Mr. Ralph D. Scott
Economist, Research Department
International Association of Machinists
and Aerospace Workers
1300 Connecticut Avenue
Washington, D. C. 20036

Dear Mr. Scott:

Your letter of November 1 to Mr. Byers regarding information on asbestosis has been referred to me for reply.

The Public Health Service is very interested in this subject and presently has under way a health study involving cohorts of workers in the insulation, brake lining, building products and textile asbestos industries. (See L. J. Cralley "Study of the Asbestos Products Manufacturing Industry in the United States") In addition, the Public Health Service is investigating the environmental exposure of these workers with the ultimate aim to develop criteria and standards involving safe levels of exposure. (See J. R. Lynch "Asbestos Study - Procedures and Findings")

It is recognized that asbestos is a hazardous material and that exposure must be controlled. In this respect, this material is no different from a host of other toxic materials encountered in the industrial environment. We do not know at this time the exact safe levels of exposure to asbestos but recent studies have shown that when exposure is kept at a low level demonstrable physiologic or pathologic changes in asbestos workers are either highly reduced or eliminated. (Ref. J. F. Knox, R. S. Doll and I. D. Hill, "Cohort Analysis of Changes in the Incidence of Bronchial Carcinoma in a Textile Asbestos Factory", Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences Volume 132, Art. 1, p. 526-535 -- T. F. Mancuso and A. A. El-Attar, "Mortality Pattern in a Cohort of Asbestos Workers", Journal of Occupational Medicine 9:4, April 1967)

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Mr. Ralph Scott

Although it is recognized that exposure to asbestos itself may be important in the development of disease, there remains unanswered questions regarding the importance of various types of asbestos and of various metallic and organic materials which may be associated with the asbestos fiber itself. (See L. J. Cralley, R. C. Keenan, and J. K. Lynch "Exposure to Metals in the Manufacture of Asbestos Textile Products")

In addition to the work being done in the Public Health Service, several investigators in this country are doing research into the health aspects of asbestos exposure and the role of other components of the environment to which asbestos workers are subjected. Among these are:

Dr. Clark W. Couper
School of Public Health
University of California
Berkeley, California 94705

Dr. Paul Gross
Industrial Hygiene Foundation
440 Fifth Avenue
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213

Dr. Jan Lieben
Division of Occupational Health
Pennsylvania Department of Health
Health and Welfare Building
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Dr. Arthur J. Vorwald
College of Medicine
Wayne State University
Detroit, Michigan 48207

Inquiries directly to these individuals would allow them to bring you up to date on the various aspects of research in which they are particularly interested.

I trust this information will be of value to you and if we can be of further help, please let me know.

Sincerely yours,

William S. Lainhart, M.D.
Medical Director
Assistant Chief, Field Studies
Occupational Health Program

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Enclosures

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Dr. Franklin H. Moore, Commissioner
Connecticut Department of Health
Hartford, Connecticut 06103

Dear Dr. Moore:

The U. S. Public Health Service is presently conducting an epidemiological study of the asbestos industry. This study was prompted by our need to determine the safe level of exposure for the purpose of preventing asbestosis as well as to assess the relation of exposure to asbestos dust and cancer.

We would like to get in touch with you to make arrangements with your occupational health section for a joint study of asbestos exposure in certain Connecticut plants as part of this national program. This study would serve to increase our cohort of exposed workers and to provide additional information to your organization on the status of asbestos exposure in Connecticut.

The general scope of the study is described in the attached reprint. The full time medical study phase is not in operation as yet and would be the subject of additional discussions. Please let us know if you require any additional information.

Sincerely yours,

Howard H. Ayer
Chief, Environmental Activities
Field Division
Occupational Health Program

Enclosure

cc: Mr. Hyatt, Officer.
Dr. Canby

REPLYING

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