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Current Comment

PROTECTION AGAINST DUSTS

As a direct result of the work of such men as Gardner at Saratoga Lake, Sayers of the U. S. Public Health Service, Lanza of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company and Parvost of the University of Pennsylvania, the clinical and pathologic aspects of the silicosis problem are slowly but surely becoming clarified. In the prevention of silicosis in the mining industry, the physician has long advocated less dust in the air breathed, but the practical mining man has been unable to achieve adequate cleanliness and still continue his industrial operations. In many phases of mining and other industries, however, signal advances have been made in dust control. The Bureau of Mines has always been at the front in the formulation of such improvements. Through its Pittsburgh experimental station the Bureau of Mines now offers a new routine for the testing and certifying of respirators or dust masks for protection against the inhalation, by workmen, of harmful dusts, fumes and mists. It will be recalled that it was this station which pioneered in the development of the U. S. Army gas mask at the time of America's entry into the war. Since then the bureau has formulated a series of schedules for testing and certifying industrial gas masks. So useful have the certifications become that purchasers are loath to buy masks which lack this certificate. Until the publishing of the new schedule 21 there was no federal or private testing code to which the manufacturer of respirators could turn for certification of his product. The result has been an unfortunate procedure in the manufacture and sale of inferior protective devices. The new schedule gives a series of examinations and tests sufficiently exacting for the most fastidious. The purchaser of industrial respirators for protecting workmen will do well to demand articles with the Bureau of Mines' stamp of approval.

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