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RETURN TO
BARRY CASTLEMAN

1 copy
Card

Burton LeDoux

Edel Lacasse
Edel Bagnew Love

ASBESTOSIS
Whitby

EAST BROUGHTON
Province of Quebec
Canada

JANUARY 1942

CABINET DU PREMIER MINISTRE
Province de Québec

Québec, Sept. 2nd 1941

M. Odilon Vachon,
East Broughton,
Co. Beauce.

Dear Sir,

Your letter of August 27th has come to my attention. The months of July and August are vacation time for employees of the civil service; consequently government business are undermanned at that time. At the end of July and beginning of August I took a few days vacation myself.

On my return I was given a letter, addressed to me by the pro-mayor of East Broughton. The subject of that letter was the problem which you mention in your own.

I replied to the pro-mayor that the government would continue to do all that was reasonably possible to effect a remedy to the situation since, conforming to the custom of the Union Nationale government, was always happy to seek, to find and to apply the best and most salutary reforms in order to assure the welfare and prosperity of the people of the province.

DUPLESSIS

In the case you mention, the government and particularly the Department of Health have already, and for some time occupied themselves with measures for correcting the situation of which you complain. As you know, power of government has been held by self-styled liberals for 45 years during the last half century - 40 of these years in a row.

With the best will in the world, it is impossible to remedy in a day or so the innumerable abuses of which those people (Liberals) have been guilty, but we shall proceed with all reasonable diligence, possible and in the most appropriate way to fit in with the best interests of the province in general, and of East Broughton in particular.

M. DUPLESSIS

The asbestos deposits in the eastern townships of Quebec are the most extensive in North America, and since along about 1890 have enabled Canada to maintain world leadership in the production of this valuable mineral. Demand for asbestos fibre has steadily and immensely increased during these last 25 years; many new uses are now being found for it; and all signs point to a further expansion of facilities for its production in Quebec, known and still unexploited reserves there being very large. It would therefore seem imperative to examine the conditions under which the people of this region work and live.

In so far as the past is concerned, investigation reveals that the exploitation of these mineral deposits has brought about an incalculable amount of unnecessary misery, chronic invalidism, and premature death to the district.

Today, approximately 30,000 people live in the asbestos region of Quebec. About one quarter of these are almost continuously exposed to heavy and dangerous concentrations of the dust produced by the mining and processing of asbestos, and therefore liable to contract the fatal disease called asbestosis. The remaining three quarters of the population is unduly exposed to pulmonary tuberculosis. Health conditions in these asbestos towns are appallingly bad, and the whole region has become a charnel house almost beyond compare. There is no valid excuse for such a condition. And unless radical steps are taken immediately to eliminate it, fatal disease will be visited upon these people on a scale very much greater than in the past.

Conditions in the asbestos towns vary. Pending a complete survey of the whole region, a description will be given here of the conditions which have prevailed, and which do now prevail, at East Broughton, a village of approximately 3,000 persons, all French Canadians exeepting for 20 to 25. This village is the site of an asbestos mine and plant operated by the Quebec Asbes-

tos Corporation, Ltd.,—a subsidiary of the Philip Carey Mfg. Co. of Lockland (near Cincinnati), Ohio, U.S.A.

THIS CASE PRESENTS A PARALLEL TO THAT OF ST. REMI D'AMHERST. HERE, AS THERE, WE ARE DEALING FUNDAMENTALLY WITH THE STUPIDITY MANIFESTED MUCH TOO OFTEN BY MEN IN THEIR RELATIONS WITH ONE ANOTHER. OVER AND ABOVE THAT, WE ARE DEALING WITH CRIMINAL NEGLIGENCE, RESPONSIBILITY FOR WHICH IS SHARED EQUALLY BY THE QUEBEC ASBESTOS CORPORATION, LTD. AND THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF QUEBEC.

The social problem presented by East Broughton is simple. But first, it is necessary to know the nature of the disease, or rather of the diseases, produced in the individuals who assist in the mining and processing of asbestos, if precautions are not taken to protect them from the hazards of the industry.

— 1 —

ASBESTOS

"Asbestos" is a commercial term applied to fibrous varieties of several minerals. These minerals vary widely in composition. Generally, the asbestos found in Quebec consists of 40 to 44% silica and an approximately equal amount of magnesium, the remaining parts being iron, aluminum and water. The chief qualities of asbestos fibre are strength, flexibility and non-inflammability. It can be spun into thread and then woven into a very large variety of textiles. It is used in very large quantity for brake linings by the automobile industry; and it enters importantly into the manufacturing of building materials. This fibre has in fact become indispensable to modern industry; to detail the hundreds of ways in which it is employed would require book-length space. About 90% of the asbestos used in the United States, the world's largest consumer, is imported from Quebec. Great Britain also imports asbestos from Quebec in large quantity. Therefore, the province occupies a very strong position in the production of this mineral; American industry especially must go to it to obtain the asbestos it needs.

Asbestosis

Each of the many handlings or manipulations of asbestos from the time it is extracted from the earth up to the time it is ready for use by the public produces considerable asbestos dust. This dust consists of exceedingly fine threads of asbestos, some of which are miscroscopic in size and therefore invisible to the naked eye. To inhale this dust over a certain period of time means death. For this is a dust that destroys tissue essential to life wherever it comes to rest in the lungs.

Asbestos is a pulmonary affliction due to the inhalation of asbestos dust. Its onset is insi-

dious; its course irregular; and its mode of termination variable. It resembles silicosis in some respects, and differs from it in others. In simple silicosis, the lungs become spotted by separate and fairly large lumps of fibrous tissue which have been formed following upon the destruction of normal lung tissue by silica particles. The principal characteristic of asbestosis, too, is a progressive replacement of essential lung tissue by useless fibrous tissue, which however tends to form a network. This process may be compared to that by which the spider spreads its web.

Asbestos dust that has entered the lungs in quantity acts as though it were directed by a spider; it falls into place to produce long and vaguely connected filaments of fibrous tissue, which come to form an indefinite and irregular pattern. All along both sides of these filaments, air sacs collapse. And as more and more of the dust invades the lungs, more and more lines of destruction are laid down in them. Consequently, the victim of the disease becomes less and less able to get enough oxygen to supply the needs of his body; he thus becomes ever and ever weaker; very slowly and under the most distressing circumstances, his lungs are progressively destroyed; and he himself finally suffocates to death.

Asbestosis and its complications

Asbestosis is a disease that progresses very slowly; and its victim becomes extraordinarily susceptible to infections, since his natural resistance to disease is gradually being worn down. Thus usually, death occurs by way of an acute pulmonary infection with which his weakened body has been unable to cope successfully, or by way of serious impairments of bodily mechanisms. The basic cause of death in these cases is asbestosis, and not the pneumonia, pulmonary tuberculosis, heart disease, etc. that are much too often certified as the cause of death.

To give but one example of the above: the person who has a partially developed asbestosis has lost the services of a certain proportion of the respiratory area of his lungs. Therefore, his blood is insufficiently aerated. And in order to serve the tissues of his whole body, his insufficiently aerated blood must circulate faster and in greater volume than in a normal person. This puts an added strain on his heart, which must do more work and gets less rest---a condition that leads to heart difficulties, especially

enlargement of the heart. Finally, the strain of maintaining circulation through lungs partially destroyed by asbestos dust becomes insupportable, and death results from heart disease--a heart disease brought about directly by asbestosis.

Signs, symptoms and conclusions

The principal signs of a developed or of a developing asbestosis are: irritation of the nose, throat, and upper respiratory tract; increasing shortness of breath; cough, sometimes wet sometimes dry; loss of appetite and of weight; weakness and loss of capacity for work; and chest pains. An early case will show only a few of these symptoms; an advanced case will usually show all. Apparently, increasing shortness of breath and cough in the asbestos worker are signs that the deadly disease is establishing itself in him. He should get out of the dust immediately and at all costs. However, this is an incurable disease. And if fibrosis of his lungs has progressed up to a certain point, removal from the dust will not save him from fatal consequences, although it will probably prolong his life.

The individual who has inhaled an amount of asbestos dust sufficient to produce extensive fibrosis will sooner or later die of the disease and/or its complications, unless that person's life is cut short by an accident or by some other unconnected disease. It has been established that work in dense concentrations of asbestos dust over a comparatively short period of time—two or three years—can eventually lead to a profound fibrosis of the lungs. Ordinarily, it takes somewhere within five years for the disease to develop in the individual exposed to the dust, sometimes it may take up to ten years, and sometimes up to 15, to 20 and 25 years. The rate of progress seems to depend upon the amount of dust inhaled, and upon the constitution of the individual himself. It may be noted that this is a disease that takes root in the younger workers more quickly than it does in the middle-aged; but no one is immune to it. Not as much is known about asbestosis as is about silicosis. Nevertheless, all the facts essential to the welfare of the people exposed to the hazards of asbestos dust have been well-known in North American mining and medical circles for at least these last 15 years.

Very little work and research in the field of asbestosis have been accomplished by the Cana-

dian medical profession, the authoritative literature on the subject, having been produced mainly in Great Britain and the United States. Significantly enough, this literature seems to deal with situations where asbestos workers were exposed to much lesser concentrations of the dust than are Quebec workers.

Asbestosis and pulmonary tuberculosis

English medical authorities generally agree that asbestosis and pulmonary tuberculosis are closely connected, that one disease helps to produce, or has an important adverse effect, upon the other. American medical authorities are inclined to reject such an opinion. The evidence in Quebec overwhelmingly favors the pre-eminent work of English research workers in this field, pulmonary tuberculosis being rampant throughout the Quebec asbestos region to an almost incredible degree.

For example: the very large majority of workers at Thetford Mines is almost continuously exposed to extraordinarily heavy concentrations of asbestos dust, and most of the general population itself is exposed in some degree to the dust, since much of it is at large in and about the village. On the other hand, the people and workers of Sorel and of Granby are not exposed to asbestos dust at all. Let us then compare death rates officially attributed to pulmonary tuberculosis in those three towns, which lend themselves well to comparison.

Official death rates attributed to pulmonary tuberculosis

(FOR 100,000)

	Sorel	*Granby*	*Thetford Mines*
1942	64.2	89.5	301.4
1943	39.3	40.2	391.7
1944	61.8	65.4	236.1

Similar evidence may be obtained by comparing the tuberculosis mortality rates at Thetford Mines with those of any town in Quebec, always excepting (1) those town in which the people are exposed to asbestos dust, and (2) places like St. Remi d'Amherst, where special conditions explain beyond doubt the extraordinarily high incidence of this contagious disease.

Confronted by the abnormally high tuberculosis mortality rates at Thetford Mines, neither the medical profession nor the provincial government can evade the issue, and both are under obligation to make a choice between two alternatives: either inhalation of asbestos dust predisposes to and aggravates pulmonary tuberculosis, or many deaths certified at Thetford Mines as having been due to tuberculosis were inaccurately diagnosed, and in reality were due to asbestosis. There are no other reasonable explanations for the ghastly phenomenon in pulmonary tuberculosis presented by Thetford Mines. The people of this town cannot afford to wait until it is convenient for the medical profession and the provincial government to make a choice: control and elimination of the dust is the obvious and obligatory procedure at this time.

It is not possible for the private investigator to obtain official death rates for pulmonary tuberculosis at East Broughton. But certainly, these are as high as those of Thetford Mines, and perhaps higher. By means of detailed case records, which may be taken as typical rather than as exceptions, we shall show that working conditions in the mine and plant operated by the Quebec Asbestos Corporation are such as to produce asbestosis, and to favor pulmonary tuberculosis, singly or together.

THERE IS NO CURE FOR ASBESTOSIS. BUT IT IS PREVENTABLE.

— II —

EAST BROUGHTON

The village

The sight of East Broughton in the twilight from the train approaching the village produces a feeling of horror in the visitor who is more or less informed regarding the nature of asbestosis. Some three quarters of the way up the side of the hill at one end of the village there stands a large ugly building. From the roof and from about the sides of this building, there is pouring what seems to be a dense, dirty-looking smoke, so heavy and so abundant that is partially obscures the building and the whole western end of the village. The light coming through the windows from inside the building changes the "smoke" in the immediate vicinity to a sort of roseate color, and the first impression is that a tremendous fire is raging inside the building. It requires considerable effort on the part of the visitor to dismiss this thought of "fire", and then to accept the fact that this "smoke" is in reality deadly asbestos dust. On alighting from the train and entering the village, one found the air literally filled with the dust. Short, tiny threads of asbestos dust were pouring down as would a heavy rain upon the streets and houses. So thick was this dust that the street lights turned on in the early evening were dimmed by it, while houses only a short distance away seemed to be enveloped by fog.

Later, it is learned that at various points of the roof of the large building on the hillside, there are fifteen chimneys, each about a foot wide, which, excepting for Sundays, belch forth every moment of the night and day a thick and heavy volume of asbestos dust into the air. Aside from these, there is still another much wider chimney adjoining the building, and it too is continuously adding its share to

the enormous cloud of dust constantly over and about the building. This ever-renewed mass of dust is picked up by the wind, and carried wherever this last wills. For the largest part of the year, the wind and air currents over the building flow from the west, pick up this perpetual mass of dust, and carry it over and down into the village immediately below. Fortunately, these air currents and the contour of the land are such that only about half of the village is enveloped by this flow of dust. That part of the dust which is not deposited upon the streets and houses of the western end of the village drifts down into and upon the farming lands of the valley across which the long main street of the village lies.

One hundred and fifty families comprising some 880 persons live in the part of the village exposed to prolonged falls of dust. So thick does the dust lie upon the sidewalks and streets of this part of the village for most of the time that pedestrians and automobiles leave visible tracks after they have passed along. The dust lies heavily upon the porches of these homes, especially in the summertime when children can play out of doors. And as they play, they inevitably kick up little clouds of asbestos dust into the air they are inhaling.

Many of these families have a small garden to the rear of their homes. So much asbestos dust has fallen upon the ground that it has become impoverished. The farmers in the valley have complained bitterly about the damage done to their land by the dust. One of them who wanted to set up a milk plant on his property was forbidden to do so by the provincial government's Agricultural Bureau; too much asbestos dust would get into the milk. The Bureau might have added that this dust has an adverse effect upon cattle too, whether they inhale it or eat it, or both.

To open the windows of homes in this part of the village means to let in the storm of asbestos dust raging outside for the largest part of the time. Sometimes, when the wind is blowing the dust away from the village, these people go to bed at night, opening their windows a little. During the night, the wind may change in direction, and bring the dust down upon the village. And when the villagers wake up, their faces, bedclothing, and homes are literally covered by dust. As a general rule, all windows of the houses are kept tightly closed, sometimes for days and nights on end, and somethimes for

every moment of an entire working week; i.e. from 12.30 of a Monday morning to 12 o'clock the next Saturday night. Nevertheless, asbestos dust seeps into these houses in quantity, despite all efforts to prevent it. On a morning after asbestos dust had streamed over a house all night long, I have rubbed a finger along window sill inside, and collected a sizable and visible amount of dust upon it, although I had carefully cleaned that window sill of all dust the previous evening, and all windows of the house had been kept tightly closed all night long. To have entered the house, this dust must have been microscopic in size, which is to say the size most dangerous to health. Evidently, it had entered in such quantity as to become visible by force of accumulation.

A schoolhouse attended by 170 children ranging in age from 6 to 16 lies in the path of the dust coming down upon the village. The brick outside of this building is stained a dirty grey by the dust. Windows must be kept closed most of the time. Microscopic dust nevertheless seeps into the class room, and circulates in the air being inhaled by the children.

The mine

This asbestos mine is now an enormous hole in the earth. Dislodging the crude asbestos from the walls and floor of this pit requires first drilling and then the use of dynamite, both of which give rise to considerable dust, as does the loading of the broken pieces of the material, and the hauling of it to the processing plant. For reasons that remain obscure to this investigator, the literature dealing with asbestos mining gives the impression that the amount of asbestos dust produced in such pits is relatively small, and generally insufficient to be a menace to the health of the miners. Faced with such an attitude, one must remain skeptical while awaiting an accurate count of the visible and invisible asbestos dust at large in any pit under consideration.

This pit at East Broughton is several hundred feet deep, and surely the air at its bottom must be more or less stagnant. A number of men work there for many hours at a stretch, and when observed were not wearing masks as protection against the dust unquestionably at large in it. Drilling methods used in this pit are "dry". Drilling is arduous work, and the drillers have to bend over close to the point where the dust is being produced. Consequently, they are

breathing deeply in a cloud of asbestos dust for hours at a time. It should be noted that "dry" drilling methods are less costly to the operators of the mine than are other methods of drilling. Neither water, nor oil, nor dust traps are used anywhere in this pit to help keep the dust out of the air being inhaled by the workers. The demand for asbestos fibre is so great that this pit is operated in all sorts of weather, night and day. Whenever possible, the men take shelter against the rain, snow or cold in a small cabin near the place they are working. This hut also serves as their eating place, and is so poorly ventilated that it constitutes a sort of dust trap in itself.

No precaution whatsoever is taken to protect the men in this pit against asbestos dust. Conditions in it are such as to produce asbestosis, and to favor pulmonary tuberculosis. As a rule, only strong young men are employed in such pits; the rigorous work combined to excessive exposure to dampness, wetness and cold is such that others cannot hold down the job for any length of time.

The plant

Approximately 125 men and 2 women work in or immediately about the plant operated by the Quebec Asbestos Corporation. It is not necessary to give a detailed description of the procedures by which asbestos fibre is separated from the crude material in which it occurs. Sufficient to say here that the raw material is fed into a series of powerful machines that crush it into ever smaller pieces, the wanted fibres meanwhile being progressively detached from it. All these various procedures give rise to enormous amounts of asbestos dust, both of the visible and invisible. No part of this East Broughton plant is free of heavy concentrations of the dust. In most parts of this large plant, the air assumes an indefinite greyish color because of the dust at large in it; in other parts, the air is so thickly filled with dust that workmen and machinery a short distance away appear as indistinct shadows. The ventilation system is utterly inadequate to cover the needs of the situation, despite the fact that it is almost continuously belching forth into the outside air an unbelievably large amount of the dust. Aside from this ineffective ventilation system, no attempt whatsoever is made to suppress or to control the dust continuously produced in the

plant when in operation. The workers are not provided with masks of any kind by the Company. As may be expected, asbestos dust lies thickly upon the machinery, floors and stairways of this plant.

All the workers in the East Broughton plant cough much during their working hours, and for some time afterwards, in an instinctive and uncontrollable effort to expel the dust they have inhaled. This coughing is followed by profuse spitting, the masses of moist material spit out being discolored by asbestos dust. In the course of time, all this brings about deep and chronic irritation and inflammation of the upper respiratory tract. This allows the microscopic and more dangerous particles of the dust to penetrate into the lungs more easily than formerly, and renders the individual concerned highly susceptible to infections, especially to pulmonary tuberculosis, present in East Broughton people to an extraordinary degree.

Whenever it is warm outside, the workmen generally keep open the many windows on each of the five floors of this large plant. But at other times of the year, and whenever the wind is blowing hard, all the windows are kept closed. This building is not heated. Thus the temperature inside for the largest part of the year is damp, cold or frigid, as anyone living in Quebec will readily understand. On each floor there is a sort of booth about five feet square, in which the men can find some measure of protection against inclement temperatures, since it contains a small stove. Naturally, they pile into this booth whenever possible, which for some of the workmen is fairly often, the nature of their work permitting it. This cabin is poorly built, asbestos dust of al sizes seeps into it, and comes in whenever the door is opened to let a man in or out. There is a small open hole in its roof. Whenever the room becomes unbearably filled with the dust, the men open the small window in it, thus creating a draft that clears the air of the largest part of the dust, not all by any means, as any engineer would testify.

Excepting for the summer months, the workmen eat their mid-working day meal here and there wherever convenient inside the plant. A special booth such as that described above is used by many of the men as eating place. This "dining" room (about 20 x 10 feet) is sometimes so crowded at meal times that some of the men have to eat standing up. This room is extra-

ordinarily dirty, its walls not having been painted for many years. Its floor is encrusted thickly by the stinking accumulation of spit, dust, and filth of as many years. Several years ago, the men asked the management to have the place cleaned and painted. This request was refused. Thereupon, the men asked that they be supplied with paint, adding that they would paint the room themselves. This request too was refused.

Here then is this "dining room" in which the men regularly gather—strong healthy young men who have worked in the plant for only a few months; men predisposed to pulmonary tuberculosis and the whole category of pulmonary infection; men who have worked in the plant for a year or so and whose health is being undermined by inhalation of asbestos dust; men who have developed asbestosis and who exhibit the signs and symptoms to a moderate or to an advanced degree; and men afflicted at one stage or another by contagious pulmonary disease all coughing and spitting in profusion all over the place, either from the dust at large in the room, or from sore throat, bronchitis, or pulmonary tuberculosis, or from a developing or an established asbestosis. And this has gone on continuously in a room that has not been properly cleaned and painted for many years. Dozens of men, some now dead and gone, some presently fatally ill with asbestosis and/or its complications, have lingered in this room of perstilence, and the time has long since passed when it should have been wiped off the face of the earth by the Company and the government responsible for its existence.

Some of the men working in and about the plant use the tinsmith's shop as an eating place. But dust conditions in it are not much better than anywhere else in the plant.

The toilet places in the plant are foul and abominable, and like all other parts of the plant, ususally saturated by asbestos dust. After years of neglect, these places have very recently been repainted.

Two young women (each about 18 years of age) work in a small room easily penetrated by the dust produced in the plant. Their work is to repair and to prepare the bags in which asbestos fibre is shipped to its destination. Theirs is a dusty job in its own right, and the literature on asbestosis calls attention to its danger.

The clothing the workmen wear is encrusted by dirty greyish-green asbestos dust. Dust unevenly overlays their hands and faces, and drifts in sizable amount against eyebrows, lips, noses and hair.

Conclusions re plant

There is not a single place in this plant to which workmen can retire from the dust for even a few minutes during their working hours. Moreover, for most of the year, they cannot retire from the dust by stepping out into the yard. Extraordinarily enough, the avalanche of dust issuing from the chimneys, windows and doors of the plant brings about as heavy a concentration of the dust in the yard as prevails in some parts of the plant itself. After only 15 minutes in this yard, I found breathing difficult, and began to cough and to spit.

Conditions that prevail on the premises of the Quebec Asbestos Corporation are such that few ordinary workmen can work there over a period of time without either suffering severe physical damage, or developing asbestosis and/or its complications. No precaution whatsoever is taken either by the Company or by the provincial government to protect the health of these men. Perhaps the best way to elaborate this charge is to place on record a few typical case histories of the unfortunates who have worked, or who are now working, there.

— III —

CASE HISTORIES

Dossier No. 53

Léon Cinquantetrois died in 1940 at the age of forty.

When he was about fifteen years of age, he started to work at the Quebec Asbestos Corporation. So far as can be learned, he did not work inside the plant itself. He was stationed in a long covered passageway which led from the interior of the building to a point some distance away from it. This passageway housed a conveyor, that is, machinery that carried waste asbestos material out of the plant and dumped it on to the huge pile of refuse always prominent outside asbestos plants in Quebec. There is a large amount of dust continually at large throughout this passageway, which is unventilated and unheated. Consequently, the temperature inside is always damp, and most of the year cold or frigid. It is in this passageway that Léon labored for twelve hours a day, often for sixteen hours a day, over a period of years — this without any protection against such working conditions beyond that which his own body afforded.

As a boy and young man, Léon's health was good; there is no record of tuberculosis either in his mother's family or in his father's. He married at the age of nineteen. As do all these workmen, whether they be in good health or not, he too coughed occasionally, but no attention was paid to this, since it is the usual state of affairs. Along about 1940, his wife noticed that he began to cough more frequently, sometimes a dry cough, sometimes wet. As the months went on, this cough progressively increased in frequency and in intensity. Léon then noticed that he tired easily, especially when walking up the hill to his work, and that he would arrive there out of breath. He began to lose weight; and exertion of any kind produced an out-of-breath feeling.

Inevitably, AND AS COULD HAVE BEEN FORESEEN YEARS PREVIOUSLY, Léon fell into serious illness, so serious he had to give up work. Whereupon, he entered an hospital in Quebec City where, according to his wife, the doctors did not tell him much of anything about his illness. Not feeling any better after staying in the hospital five months, he became discouraged, and returned home. On his departure, hospital authorities did not volunteer any information that might have helped him in respect to his malady.

Léon's home was so situated as to receive a good deal of the dust belched out by the plant, especially in the summertime. Nevertheless, he rested there for some three months. At the end of that time, he had been eight months without income, and since he had a wife and seven children to support, feed and clothe, he was compelled to disregard his malady. He returned to work at the Quebec Asbestos Corporation. This time he was set to work at small and "easy" jobs in the yard and in small sheds immediately outside the plant. But, and as previously recorded here, the atmosphere there is heavily filled with dust most of the time, as heavily saturated by it as is the atmosphere of some parts of the plant itself. Even a normal person in full health cannot stay in this yard for as long as fifteen minutes without experiencing some difficulty in breathing.

How Léon managed to disregard his distress and to work in this yard for the next three years must ever remain an imperishable tribute to his fortitude and to his sense of devotion to his family. One early morning after he had completed his tasks during the night-shift, he started down the hill for home, coughing, spitting, and this time bringing up blood in quantity. Blindly and instinctively, he staggered toward his home and finally reached it, having left a long trail of his blood upon the snow. His wife met him at the door. By this time his face had become chalkish in color and flecked with blood. His wife despatched some of the children to the doctor and to the priest, and led him to a sink in the kitchen, had him sit down, and held out a basin under his lips to receive the life-blood that was now pouring out of him profusely. In a few minutes, he fell over into her arms, and died.

To this day, this family does not know the cause of Léon's death. The doctor who attended him after death, and who supposedly filed the death certificate, did not volunteer any information on this subject. The family has never applied for compensation either from the Company or from

the government. Léon's wife suspected that somehow her husband's death was tied up with asbestos dust, and she had heard a vague rumor about "compensation" — a long word. The idea of compensation in connection with her husband's death seemed fantastic to her, since she was aware that no one in similar circumstances in East Broughton was collecting it. Nevertheless she inquired here and there, but no one knew anything about it until she struck a notary.

It so happened that early in life Léon had decided to save money and to protect his family by investing in life insurance. Accordingly, he had insured his life for $7,000. Considering the low rate of pay prevailing at the Quebec Asbestos Corporation before the war, it remains a mystery as to how he managed to support his family and to pay his insurance premiums too. But he did. News that his widow was collecting $7,000 insurance money travelled fast in the small village. The notary whom she consulted told her she could not obtain compensation, since she had collected on her husband's life insurance policy — a lamentable piece of misinformation that influenced her to give up all thought of claiming compensation. In connection with this insurance money, it is worthwhile noting that an agent of "Les Mères Nécessiteuses" did not appear at her door. No help was forthcoming from any quarter.

The family tightened its belt, and has so far managed its resources well. The two eldest girls, now twenty one and twenty respectively, are teaching school. Another girl, aged sixteen, is attending Normal School at Thetford Mines. Three of the children are under sixteen, and still at school in the village. But Léon's eldest son is in a sanatorium, seriously ill, shadows on his lungs.

Dossier No. 14

Maurice Quatorze died in 1946 at the age of 56. He had worked for the Quebec Asbestos Corporation approximately 25 years, most of the time in parts of the plant where the dust is not so thick as in some other parts. But his wife reports that he had also worked for various indefinite periods of time "in the dust", which is to say in the language of the people, in heavy concentrations of the dust. She says that on arrival home from work his clothing would be covered with the dirty whitish dust, and that sometimes he would remark, "Today, the dust was so thick where I worked that it could

have been cut with a knife." Some five to six years previous to his death, Maurice began to feel weak, incapable of work, and generally ill at ease physically and mentally, all this accompanied by much coughing. He consulted a doctor and was told he had asthma, and that he would recover from this illness. He continued at his work.

Maurice lived in a small poorly built cottage situated in close and direct line to receive a full share of the avalanche of dust coming down upon the village for most of the time. All windows in such a house are kept tightly closed in an effort to keep the dust out. His wife reports that he had great difficulty in breathing, that he choked easily, and that he coughed a good deal. She says he would wake up in the night gasping for breath, and that he would cry out in desperation that the windows be opened. This was a man in cruel and ominous distress, and not to be denied. The windows were opened. Whereupon, a veritable storm of dust would blow into his room and all through the house. Having obeyed an imperative instinct to take action —no matter how blind—to relieve his agony, Maurice would calm down a bit, go off into a fitful sleep, meanwhile inhaling more and more of the death-dealing dust that now saturated the house. And in a room near him lay his son, whose subsequent stomach ailments and operations are usually closely associated with an anxiety and fear complex.

Maurice became more and more ill, and he finally had to give up work altogether some three months prior to his death. Such was his suffering and misery that he was removed to an hospital in Quebec City. There, according to his wife, he was told he had "enlargement of the heart", and that he would never get well. He was also told that his clinical picture was somewhat confused, and that the doctors could not say positively that he had either silicosis or asbestosis. Shortly afterwards, Maurice died.

As in the case of hundreds of men in Quebec, who have been or who are now afflicted either by silicosis or by asbestosis, Maurice knew for a while previous to his death that he was about to die, that he had been in fact condemned to death. But at this point in his case, there enters an important factor, which, so far as I know, has never been present in the cases of East Broughton men in similar position. Before he died, Maurice strongly advised his family to claim compensation from the Company and the

provincial government. How he learned that his family had the right to make such a claim, and why he himself did not exercise his own right to make a claim while he was ill and alive, I cannot tell. The brutal fact is that, aside from Maurice, these East Broughton workmen and families have not known that they possessed such rights in statute law AND in common law. Neither doctors or lawyers, nor municipal and provincial authorities, nor politicians in or out of office, nor newspapers and magazines, have told these people the facts regarding this matter. After having talked with very many workmen and their families in the village, I have yet to find a single person among them who had even an elementary knowledge as to the rights possessed by all citizens in this respect.

At any rate, Maurice's widow applied for compensation, addressing her claim to "La Commission des Accidents". Her claim was summarily rejected on grounds that it had not been established that Maurice had contracted any occupational disease compensable under the "Workmen's Compensation Act of Quebec". The letter received from "La Commission des Accidents" informed her that the case was consequently considered closed. Maurice's widow is not eligible to receive aid from the Bureau of "Les Mères Nécessiteuses", since her children are above the age of 16. Her daughter is now 18, and has been unable to find work in the village. One son in practically an invalid as result of stomach ailments and operations cited above. The other son, a strong healthy young man has on several occasions applied for work at the Quebec Asbestos Corporation (practically the only employment available in East Broughton), and for obscure reasons has been refused employment, although other men were being hired at the time.

This family of four is therefore living in exceedingly straightened circumstances.

Dossier No. 105

Alphonse Centcinq died in 1942 at the age of forty-five.

Beginning at the age of eighteen, he worked in the Quebe Asbestos Corporation plant for an indefinite number of years. He then transfered to another mine and plant then being operated in the neighborhood, where he worked again for an indefinitie number of years. Dust conditions in this mine and plant too are reported to have been bad. Alphonse returned to work in the

Quebec Asbestos Corporation plant where, on this occasion, he remained uninterruptedly for twelve years, and up to a few months prior to his death.

At the Quebec Asbestos Corporation plant, Alphonse was a "loader", his work consisting principally of handling bags filled with asbestos fibre — a very dusty job. This occupation is not child's play, requiring as it does considerable exertion. Consequently, a "loader" is breathing deeply and heavily while performing his work. Each handling of a bag of asbestos fibre releases into the air a good deal of dust, especially the very fine invisible dust that is invariably fatal to the person who inhales it over a period of time. Alphonse's widow reports that her husband's clothing was abundantly covered by dust when he arrived home from work, and that for hours afterwards, he would cough vigorously and spit out dirty-looking moist masses. It is worthy of note that much dust from his clothing was released daily into a house whose windows were kept tightly closed against the dust at large in the village, and in which there lived his wife and eleven children.

Eventually and inevitably, Alphonse fell into illness. His wife reports that his coughing progresively increased, and that he turned to various home-made remedies for relief. He also consulted local doctors from time to time, always paying for such consultations, and for various syrups and tonics supplied him. He also visited the clinic at Thetford Mines, where x-rays of his chest were taken. According to his wife, the doctors at the clinic told him nothing.

Finally, the local doctors told Alphonse that he should give up work altogether, that he was very ill, and that he had heart trouble. In other words, his heart could no longer do the work normally expected of it. Following his wife's advice, and hoping for betterment, Alphonse entered an hospital in Quebec City. There, he was told by the doctors that he had heart trouble, and by the nurses that the "enlargement of his heart" must be due to a "surprise" he had received. This story of a "surprise" has since helped to quiet the vague and healthy fear Alphonse's family had in connection with asbestos dust. Alphonse remained in the hospital for a month and a half, and then returned home to die ten days later at the age of forty-five.

His widow was left with eleven children, the eldest being seventeen years of age and the youngest three. She has never applied for compensation. She knows nothing whatsoever regarding her rights, and those of her family, in

this respect. One fine day after Alphonse's death, there appeared mysteriously at her door an agent of "Les Mères Nécessiteuses", a provincial government relief organization. Some months after this visit — and this is a long, long time when there are twelve persons to feed and clothe—the family was officially placed on the relief roll of the Province: rate of relief about $50.00 per month. This beggarly allowance was for a whole year the sole income of the family. Here then was a family condemned to extreme poverty. Each year since then, one of the children has reached and passed the age of sixteen. Consequently, the monthly check received from "La Commission des Accidents" has each year become smaller and smaller, while the cost of living has scored progressively to everyone knows where...

The condition of this family has improved very slightly during these last two years. The eldest daughter died at the age of twenty-one in 1915 of a pulmonary disease in which malnutrition pays a prominent part. Two of the girls have left home, and are working in hotel in nearby towns. (Three less to feed and to clothe at home). The eldest son has now been working for some months at the Quebec Asbestos Corporation plant; same kind of work, same dust conditions, encountered by his father. Two or three of the younger children occasionally find odd jobs in the village that bring in a few precious dollars.

Dossier No. 79

Louis Soixantedixneuf is now forty years old.

There is no record of pulmonary tuberculosis either in his mother's family or in his father's. As a young man in excellent health, he worked in various asbestos mines and plants for about four and a half years. Afterwards, he worked for the Quebec Asbestos Corporation for about eleven years. Louis was first employed by this Company in its open pit, where he assisted in drilling operations, always performed by dry methods. He reports that on many occasions he helped in boring into the side of the mine wall, and then in hollowing out a long tunnel in which he and his companions worked for hours at a time. The dust in the air inside these tunnels was so thick the men could hardly see each other. The Company did not provide them with masks of any description, and no one ever told Louis that the dust was dangerous.

After working for about a year in the open pit, Louis was transfered to the job of "cleaner" in-

side the plant. Two or three times during his working hours, he would gather into piles the dust that had settled and accumulated on the stairways and floor assigned to him, using for this purpose a dry brush and shovel. At these times, he moved and breathed in an extraordinarily heavy concentration of dust. And when he was not busy, the only "refuge" available to him was the little cabin on his floor, which as we have recorded was a dust-trap in itself.

Among Louis' duties, there was one that assumes great importance in the scheme of things that has prevailed in this East Broughton plant.

The "dust chamber" in which a certain amount of dust is deposited by the ventilation system fills up rapidly. Thus twice a week, Louis would enter this room to clean it out. On these occasions, he would wade knee-high, and sometimes waist-high, in the dust of the centre of the room, open a small trap door in the floor, and the dust would fall to another place on the floor below. To get the bulk of the dust out of the room, it was necessary to shovel it down through the trap-door. After this had been done, Louis would use a sort of rake or dry brush to clean the walls and floor of the dust, some of which is sticky. He reports that the dust was so thick in the atmosphere that the light from the electric bulb at the ceiling was totally blotted out while he was in the room. The Company did not provide him with any protection whatsoever against the dust.

No man can withstand such conditions successfully for long. Inevitably, Louis became ill, — excessive cough, out-of-breath spells, weakness, incapacity for work and general malaise, all progressively increasing as time went on. Finally, he had to give up work about six years ago. He rested at home for about six months, and returned to his work. At the end of another year, he had to give up again. He rested for a short time, and then found a small job that required little exertion in another village. He had to give up this work too in a little while, and has since remained at home incapacitated for work of any kind — a very sick man .

When Louis became seriously ill, he repaired to the clinic at Thetford Mines, where x-rays were taken of his lungs. He was told he had shadows or spots on his lungs, probably tuberculosis. Louis says the doctors fell into some sort of dispute over the nature of his illness, but that afterwards it was decided he had "simple silicosis". Under their direction, he applied to "La Commission des Accidents" for compensation. He reports that "La Commission des Accidents" informed him that it allowed compensation in cases of "double silicosis", not in cases of "simple silicosis", and that his claim was therefore rejected, but that he was advised to go to a certain hospital in Montreal for further examination. Louis followed the advice given by "La Commission des Accidents". About three months later, the hospital doctors reported that the nature of his malady was unknown. Since then, he has from time to time consulted local doctors who tell him that his lungs are diseased, prescribe certain medicines, and suggest a sanatorium. Louis knows he is close to death; he does not want to die away from his family; and he rejects the idea of a sanatorium. His home is in direct line to receive a full share of the dust belched out by the plant. Asbestos dust seeps in, despite tightly closed windows, and the untiring efforts of his wife to keep it out.

In 1944, Louis and his wife and their one child now eight years old were placed on the public relief roll of the province, and as usual by way of "Les Mères Nécessiteuses".

Thereafter, this family received from this source a monthly check of $20.00 up to October 1947, when the amount was raised to $30.00. The mother has found half time work in the village, and brings in a few dollars. The family is very poor; Louis' consultations with doctors and the medicines they have prescribed have been expensive; in addition — and who can blame him — he has bought one expensive patent medicine after another in desperate hope of betterment. Municipal taxes on the humble dwelling owned by the family are nearly three years overdue; there is no money to pay them. Therefore, the family is faced with the prospect of soon losing its home, since the Municipal Council usually forecloses when taxes are more than three years overdue.

Dossier No. 87

Adélard Quatrevingtsept is a completely broken down man, very ill and close to the point of death at the age of fifty-three.

Adélard was in excellent health when he first went to work at the Quebec Asbestos Corporation plant. There is no record of pulmonary tuberculosis in his mother's family, or in his father's. He was first employed in the plant as a "bagger". The work of such a man will be described in the next dossier. Sufficient to say here that this is

.est of all jobs in the mine and plant. .e hours a day, six days a week, Adélard la- .ed strenuously and breathed deeply in an at- mosphere contaminated by an infinite number of visible and invisible particles of asbestos dust. He says that the dust was so thick in the air that oftentimes he could not clearly see objects ten feet away. His home was situated so as to receive a full share of the dust belched out by the plant. Thus for eight years, never a breath of clean air while at work; and for most of the time not a breath of clean fresh air while at home.

Adélard, tired of his job after eight years, gave it up, and went to work on a farm. About ten years later, he returned to work again at the Quebec Asbestos Corporation plant. This time, he was set to work outside the plant, on what is called "le calvaire" by French Canadian workmen. This word "calvaire" is a corruption of the English word "culvert", and never has the genius of the French Canadian ordinary people for Frenchifying English words been employed more aptly (language professors, take note) .

To work "sur le calvaire" means to work along and at the end of a sort of road atop the gigantic pile of rejected asbestos ore seen outside Quebec asbestos processing plants. Along the ridge of such piles there is a conveyor that carries rejected material from the plant, and dumps it at the far end of the pile, which in time becomes mountainous in size. At the very end of "le calvaire", some two hundred and fifty feet up in the air, Adélard met his final doom. The continuous dumping of the rejected material onto this pile, and the act of spreading it out or shovelling it down into space, produced a dense cloud of dust which was blown back sharply into Adélard's face by the high winds generally prevailing at the high end of "le calvaire". At no time did the Company provide him with protection of any kind against the dust. He bought a pair of goggles to protect his eyes. He did not know that it was dangerous to inhale the dust, but since breathing in it was not too pleasant, he would periodically buy a mouth and nose mask at the village store. He had to discard these masks, since he could not do his work while wearing one.

After some six months "sur le calvaire", Adélard began to feel ill effects . He noticed a marked out-of-breath feeling after exertion; he felt vague distress; he tired easily and he began to cough frequently — a dry cough. He consulted a local doctor and was told he had heart trouble. He was advised to go to the Thetford Mines clinic

for x-ray examination. After a while, he repaired to the clinic, whose report was forwarded to his local doctor. Adélard was then told that he had a "veil" over his lungs, and that his malady was not contagious. (Asbestosis alone is not contagious.)

Although markedly ill, Adélard had all through this phase continued at his work; the man had a wife and a houseful of children, some of them ill, to support. But the time came, some two or three years later, when he had to give up work altogether. He could no longer walk the long painful road of "le calvaire" without becoming so out-of-breath that he could not work for the remainder of the day. He again repaired to the Thetford Mines clinic. This time he was told that he had heart trouble and tuberculosis, and that his malady was contagious. According to Adélard, none of the doctors whom he consulted ever mentioned the word "asbestosis" to him. His cough had long ago become wet, and there he sits and lies today, coughing and spitting profusely, dreadfully ill, in a ramshackel house that is as tightly closed as possible against the avalanche of dust descending upon the village.

No doctor, municipal or provincial government official, or Company official has ever breathed the word "compensation" to Adélard. He knows nothing whatsoever about "La Commission des Accidents", and has never applied for compensation either to it or to the Company. About a year ago, the name of his family was inscribed on the roll of "Les Mères Nécessiteuses". Let us then see how the family has fared.

The eldest daughter keeps home for the family, the mother having died of pulmonary disease about six years ago. A son aged nineteen has now been in a sanatorium these last three months; he coughs a good deal, and according to report, is suffering from "pleurisy", and inflammation of the lungs. Another son, suffering from pulmonary disease of some sort, entered a sanatorium when he was twenty one, tired of the confinement after three years, and returned home, where he has been these last three years. When I visited him early last September, he was shockingly ill but still on his feet. (Two or three weeks later, he died, supposedly of pulmonary disease).

Two of the older sons are now working "in the woods", state of health unknown to me. A son aged sixteen remains at home; not working. Three other small children are still at primary school in the village.

The last time I visited this family was in September of 1948. It was on a Thursday afternoon of a cold day, and the wind was blowing a thick storm of dust upon the house. All the windows were tightly closed, and had been continuously for nearly four nights and days. Nevertheless, asbestos dust had seeped into the house; it lay in visible degree on window sills and here and there on the floor, although the home was clean otherwise. The air inside the kitchen-living room in which we assembled was warm and oppressive. The poor father, Adéland, sat by the stove, and despite all efforts to the contrary, coughed and spat. The son, who was to die of highly contagious disease a few weeks later, stood and swayed in front of the stove, coughing and spitting. The three small children had come in from school and had brought along some of their little friends; and in a corner of this room of pestilence, the group of seven or eight had settled down to the busy occupations of children.

Conclusion re dossiers detailed here.

Asbestosis nearly always leads to pulmonary tuberculosis or to heart disease, and frequently to both.

According to medical and government records, these workmen are ill or have died of pulmonary tuberculosis or of heart disease. But if proper consideration is given to the dusty conditions in which they worked for five, 10 and up to 25 years, one may say in all certainty that these men are or were victims of asbestosis and its complications. It is asbestos dust that shortened their lives.

These workmen, ill or dead of an occupational disease, have never received compensation, although they were fully entitled to it by way of both common law and of the Workmen's Compensation Act of Quebec.

They never received compensation by way of common law because they never brought suit for damage against the Company; and they never brought suit against the Company because no one has ever informed them regarding the nature of asbestosis. None of the numerous persons interviewed, workmen presently ill, widows, and children of dead workmen, seemed to know anything at all regarding this disease.

At this point, the doctors in the asbestos region of Quebec must face their responsibility in this whole situation. How can they explain that they did not warn these workmen of the dangers of working in this mine and plant? How can these doctors explain that they did not tell these workmen they were suffering from asbestosis, and that, consequently, they had right to compensation? We do not know the answers to these questions. But what we do know is that not long ago one of these doctors said, "If we told the workmen of East Broughton that they were affected by asbestosis, it would cost the Company too much money".

The workmen of East Broughton, or their widows, have never brought suit for damage against the Company. And if they had taken such action, perhaps it would have given rise only to other "Procès des Veuves de St-Remi d'Amherst", the lesson of which should not be forgotten.

The workmen of East Broughton, or their families have never received compensation from "La Commission des Accidents de Québec". The very few claims they addressed to the "Commission" were side-tracked.

The refusal of the "Commission" to award compensation was based upon inacceptable pretext. For example: one of these workmen, fatally ill of an occupational disease, was told by a responsible official of "La Commission des Accidents": "The government awards compensation in cases of 'double silicosis', but not in cases of 'simple silicosis'" This term "double silicosis" does not exist in medical literature. There is no disease recognized as such by the medical profession.

In outline, these cases are like very many of those at St. Remi d'Amherst: a Company abuses an employee by maintaining conditions of work that must eventually and inevitably bring about his premature death; the Company escapes its responsibility altogether; the provincial government sits by idly, knowing of these conditions; the provincial government rejects the employee's claim to compensation, giving one frivolous reason or another to justify its action, and then condemns his family to hopeless poverty by sanctimoniously inscribing its name on the relief roll of the province.

There are literally hundreds of such cases in Quebec. Responsibility for their existence rests upon the Companies that take advantage of the ignorance of the population in medical matters; upon certain doctors who are not fulfilling their

such abuses; and upon society, which does not raise its voice in effective protest.

Therefore, the main objectiyes in this situation at East Broughton may be simply outlined. Society as a whole must force the Company and the government (1) to repair as far as is possible the wrong perpetrated upon these families, and (2) to eliminate asbestos dust from the air being inhaled by these people. If the second objective is not attained, tragedies such as those detailed here will multiply in number in the very near future.

— IV —

THE BAGGERS

Twenty-four men who work in the plant operated by the Quebec Asbestos Corporation, but who are not employees of the company.

The dustiest, and therefore the most dangerous, tasks in this plant are accomplished by men who are not employees of the Quebec Asbestos Corporation. Since the work these men do is an all-important and integral part of the work that must be done in the plant, why are they not employees of the Company? Surely, there must be an answer. What then are the facts in this extraordinary situation?

These 24 men are known in the plant as "baggers" and "pilers". Their story will be told here by way of the story of a "bagger" whom, for the sake of convenience, we shall call Joseph.

Joseph is a strong, well-built and vigorous young man aged about 25, a capable worker in excellent health. He has worked in a large room on the first floor of the Quebec Asbestos Corporation plant for these last four years. Into this room there enters many shutes from which asbestos fibre ready for "bagging" falls continuously when the plant is in operation. At various places along a wall of this room, the fibre accumulates in great piles, at the edge of which Joseph stands, a shovel in his hands. He bends down close to the pile, scoops up a great shovelfull of the fibre, turns and dumps it into a burlap bag held out wide-open to him by a fellow-worker. The falling of the fibre onto the floor and Joseph's shovelling combine to release into the air a very large amount of dust, in which Joseph is working with lowered head and breathing deeply. For this is a strenuous job, and moreover, he is working at top speed, since he is

paid according to the number of bags he fills. After he has filled fifty bags or so, he changes places with his companion, who takes a turn at shovelling, while Joseph holds the bags open to receive the fibre. As a bag is being filled and the fibre shaken down compactly into it, considerable dust is shot directly up into Joseph's face, since he is standing over the bag and looking down into it. When a bag has been filled to its proper limit, Joseph, who has been holding a needle in hand, sews it up in a few deft movements. The bag is then picked up by a "piler", who stacks it on others at a far end of the room. Fifty or so bags later, Joseph returns to shovelling, and so on through his working hours.

It has been mentioned previously that the asbestos dust on the stairways and floors of the plant is periodically collected by "cleaners". This particular dust is eventually deposited in a large chamber, about 80 x 60 feet in size. Twice a week, the "baggers" and "pilers" must enter this room to bag the dust it contains. For this dust is sold for good money. All of the deadly dust at large in the plant or belched down upon the village is valuable and salable. And since devices to capture practically all of it at its point of origin have long existed, it must be concluded that failure to install them is due to a malevolence or to a stupidity beyond comprehension. After all, purchase and installation of such devices could be paid for by sale of the dust they capture.

At any rate, Joseph and his companions work at top-speed in the "dust chamber" for hours at a time, twice a week. When they first enter the chamber, the dust packed down upon the floor is more than knee-high, and into it they wade and work actively. Every movement they make stirs up the dust, and the air they breathe is filled with visible and invisible particles of the mineral to a point that defies description. Finally, the men stagger out of the chamber, choking, coughing and spitting, their clothing, hands and faces, encrusted heavily by dust. They shake off as much of it as they can, and return to their usual place of work, not much less dusty than the "dust chamber" itself.

Joseph and his 23 companions are not provided with protection of any kind against the dust. There is no place in or immediately outside the plant to which they can retire for even one breath of clean fresh air. The only time they get away from incredibly heavy concentrations of dust during working hours is when they eat their midworking day meal in the foul and disease-producing "dining-room" previously described, or when they retire to the abominable place called a toilet room.

After his work, Joseph walks down the hill to his home. Some of the dust he has inhaled during his working hours has mixed with the moist secretions inside his nostrils. This mixture has hardened, and caked the inside of his nose so thickly that he can hardly breathe through it. Whereupon, he must stick a finger up his nostrills, and dig out the cakes of hardened dust — a process that frequently injures the lining of his nose, starts nosebleeding, and opens the way widely, or rather, invites infection. On arrival home in his dust-laden clothing, Joseph usually finds the house tightly closed against the storm of dust outside. Much dust has nevertheless seeped into it, and he therefore inhales more of it.

Presently, Joseph is in excellent health. He coughs very much more frenquently than does an healthy man, but this does not bother him too much, since he is unaware of its significance. About a year ago, he caught a touch of the "grippe" and becoming alarmed repaired to the clinic at Thetford Mines for x-ray examination. He was told that everything was in good order. Joseph is married; he supports a wife, his father, and his brother's child.

Joseph's brother, whom we shall call Arthur, is now 26 years old. He had worked "in the dust" at the Quebec Asbestos Corporation plant for about a year and a half when an acute attack of "pleurisy" knocked him out. After resting at home for some time, he returned to his work. Four more months "in the dust" was sufficient to knock him out permanently, and he was sent to a sanatorium where he is today: diagnosis, "pleurisy", pulmonary disease. Arthur coughs a good deal, and according to reports, is still bringing up out of his respiratory system "le coton". The men call asbestos fibre "le coton", and have learned to recognize its presence in the glutinous masses they spit out. After Arthur's tragedy had taken definite form, pulmonary tuberculosis manifested itself in his wife; thereupon, she joined him as inmate of the sanatorium. Joseph received his brother's child into his home, which though somewhat dusty, provided a roof over its head.

No one holding position of authority in Quebec has ever told Joseph that inhalation of asbestos is dangerous to his health. He says that some of the older workers in the plant insist that the dust is not dangerous, but that the younger workers are skeptical and uneasy on this score. This Joseph is a fine intelligent young man; and the same may be said of his 23 companions in work. The group does not know the truth of the conditions bearing down upon it. But it is beginning to discover it haphazardly here and there. And the most promising sign seen throughout the group is the beginning of a deep and stubborn anger — an emotion vital to the preservation of life, and that can lead to accomplishments that are socially constructive — if that anger is kept under control.

Death on the installment plan

Many men have worked as "baggers" and as "pilers" in this plant for as short a period as six months, a year or two, and have then left because they could no longer stand the dust. It is entirely reasonable to assume that these men were physically damaged to a degree that left them extraordinarily susceptible to infections of many kinds. Few men can work under such conditions for a period of five to ten years without contracting an asbestosis that will lead to premature death.

Let us return to the specific case of Joseph, which exemplifies the case of the 23 other men. Should he continue to work "in the dust", for another two, three or four years, the road ahead for Joseph is filled with unmerited disease, misery and abject poverty before he finally joins his brother, also headed precipitously for the grave. Medical literature is full of such cases. To the person who would quarrel with this unqualified prognosis given here, we might say that the tiny bit of doubt that exists in it, as must in any prognosis, should be disregarded: the life of an innocent man and of his family is at stake.

Doctors who refuse to recognize asbestosis in an individual until x-rays confirm its presence are in serious error. X-rays do not always give a true picture of what happens to the individual who inhales over a period of time air containing a heavy proportion of asbestos dust; they do not reveal the onset of the disease; and frequently, they do not reveal its progress or even its existence at an advanced stage. Moreover, and most importantly, when x-rays do confirm the existence of the disease in an individual it is too late, much too late, to do him any good; by that time, his malady has become incurable and fatal. There is but one intelligent approach to the problem of asbestosis. Joseph will become fatally ill if he continues to work and to live "in the dust". Eliminate the dust from his environment — and this can be done — and he will not contract this disease, whose complicated forms are difficult — often impossible — to recognize or to separate one from the other by way of x-ray techniques.

What has been said in the above paragraph about asbestosis is equally applicable to silicosis. The rather mixed reactions of the Provincial government to my article "La Silicose" (published "Relations", March 1948) cannot be detailed here; but one of them serves to illustrate the general incompetence of this government to deal with the problem of occupational diseases. A new government commission has been set up to study the problem of silicosis, and presumably of asbestosis. The first announced move of this Commission was to send a prominent doctor in government employ to London and Paris, where conferences on occupational diseases were scheduled. This is the same old bunk with which the government has met the protestations of the people of East Broughton for more than four years. Announcement of one expensive trip after another by government functionaries to here, there, and everywhere, all paid for by the public, we need not say. Promises passed out galore before trip and after trip, but never one single effective act to eliminate or to control the dust being inhaled by these people.

The problem at East Broughton is acute, and demands immediate action, not deluxe voyages to various distant points of the earth. The people of East Broughton are riddled by asbestosis, tuberculosis, heart disease; the facts in all their horror are available, and the government knows this. Ample and authoritative medical and engineering literature on the subject of inhalation of asbestos dust has been in the possession of the government for years, or has been easily available to it. Throughout this literature there runs the inescapable refrain: the resulting disease is incurable and fatal; it takes many forms, some of which are familiar and others not; it is a disease that can be prevented by con-

trolling or by eliminating the dust in the workers' environment; means so to do exist, and can be applied. These few facts indicate the necessary and immediate steps to take to solve the problem at hand. Any knowledge acquired regarding the refinements of the disease at these London and Paris conferences is an embellishment that might well wait until after the obvious steps have been taken.

For meanwhile, Joseph is trudging up the hill to the plant, where the figure of Death meets him daily to make a payment of a few dollars upon his life, which it contracted for — somewhat along the lines of an installment plan — when he first went to work there. This young man is even now running short of the commodity he is exchanging; very soon he will run out of it altogether.

Why are not Joseph, the "baggers" and the "pilers" employees of the Quebec Asbestos Corporation?

I shall not attempt to answer the above question. But I can tell the precise effects this extraordinary arrangement has upon the fortunes of Joseph and of his 23 companions, upon the Quebec Asbestos Corporation, and upon the provincial government.

Joseph, and that is to say here the "baggers" and "pilers", are employees of Lucien Nadeau.

Lucien Nadeau is a former employee of the Quebec Asbestos Corporation. He worked in the plant for some 20 years, and then became incapacitated for work. It is generally understood among the villagers that Mr. Nadeau is afflicted by "silicosis". (Throughout the asbestos region the word "asbestosis" seems taboo. The illness the men contract in the mines and plants is indiscriminately called tuberculosis or heart trouble or silicosis; mention of any word tying up the illness to asbestos being generally avoided. Such evasion serves to keep the workmen and their families in line, since it allays whatever fear they may have regarding the danger of inhalation of asbestos dust.)

After he had been out of [illegible]

Quebec Asbestos Corporation. And there an arrangement was concluded whereby the Company set him up in business as a "contractor". In his capacity as "contractor", Mr. Nadeau agreed to bag all the asbestos fibre produced in the plant, and to set the bags aside for shipment. The Company agreed to pay him a small commission for each bag of fibre prepared for shipment — an arrangement that permitted him to collect a good day's pay for himself. But Mr. Nadeau had no money to pay the men necessary to get the work done. Whereupon, the Company agreed to give Mr. Nadeau a check at the end of each two weeks during the time in which the contract was in force — the size of the check to depend upon the amount he would need to pay the "baggers" and "pilers" at current rates, plus his own commission. Thus at the end of each two week period since Mr. Nadeau has become a "contractor", he has received a check from the Company. He turns this check into money, and pays his men in cash, the amount left over being his own remuneration. Mr. Nadeau therefore is not actually an independent business man, since he is financed throughout his career as "contractor" by the Company. In other words, this set-up from which Lucien Nadeau emerges as a "contractor" is a fake. But the men who work for him are legally his employees.

The profit Mr. Nadeau collects as "contractor" is sufficient to support himself and family, and no more. Therefore, he is unable to provide his employees with the protection he must, if he wishes to avoid serious charges of criminal negligence. Moreover, he knows relatively nothing about the dangers of inhalation of asbestos dust; he knows relatively nothing about the devices which could eliminate or control this deadly dust being inhaled by his employees; and if he did have such knowledge, he does not have a nickel to pay for their cost of purchase and installation.

Enter Mr. E. E. Spafford who was up to a few months ago general manager of the Quebec [illegible]

poration. Mr. O'-Donnell, son-in-law to the Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. Louis St. Laurent, acted as legal counsel to the "Timmins group" implicated in the "silicosis affaire". The so-called "rectification" of my article "La Silicose, de St. Remi d'Amherst à l'Ungava" by "Relations", and the subsequent refusal of "Relations" to print any reply by me to declarations made either publicly or privately by the "Timmins group", were brought about perhaps chiefly by Mr. O'Donnell, whose brilliance and ability have been well-known to the Canadian legal profession for some years.



M. Hugh O'DONNELL, K.C.

On occasions in the past, Joseph and his fellow-workers have complained about working conditions to Mr. Spafford. Joseph tells me that on these occasions, Mr. Spafford has replied "You do not work for the Quebec Asbestos Corporation", or "I don't know you", or "I have nothing to do with you". Mr. Spafford's legal position is unimpeachable. But one day sometime ago, Joseph, having finished his day's work, walked to another part of the plant, meanwhile pulling a cigarette out of his pocket and lighting it. It is forbidden to smoke in this plant. Mr. Spafford, coming along at the moment, saw Joseph smoking—an incident that led promptly to Joseph being fired from his job. After Joseph had repaired to the Company offices three or four times, Mr. Spafford finally told him he could go back to work. And so apparently, Mr. Spafford has the power to bring about the summary dismissal of these men, or to hire them, although they are not legally his employees.

Naturally, the men do not press their complaints upon their legal employer, Lucien Nadeau. He is as helpless as they are.

Occupational diseases in the United States.

The next factor of importance re the status of these men should be introduced by way of a paragraph on the history of occupational disease in the United States. The subject of dangerous trades has occupied the close attention of the American people for more than 40 years. And while working conditions here and there in the U.S. are far from ideal, very great progress has been made in solving the problem. This desirable result has been achieved in very large part because workmen have exercised their rights to bring damage suits against an employer who maintained unhealthy working conditions in his place of business. Such an employer found himself being sued in Court by one or two or as many as 10, 15, 25 or more of his employees and their families, each of them claiming anywhere from $15,000 to $25,000 and more. In innumerable cases, such suits were decided in favor of the employees, society meanwhile standing by and encouraging such action by the employees, since it was recognized by practically everyone that here was action that benefited society as a whole, as well as the interested parties. The employer got out of the mess he had created as best he could — a very expensive experience in many cases. He also made an attempt toward elimination of the working conditions that had brought disaster upon his employees, so as to avoid more suits in the future. And if he did not have sense enough to take this step of his own accord, the insurance company that handled his business prodded him into it in no uncertain manner. News of such developments spread rapidly among industrialists and insurance company officials, many of whom voluntarily took steps to eliminate in their own places of business conditions that might bring damage suits down upon them. As result, working conditions immensely improved throughout the country, and an incalculable amount of disease and consequent tragedy averted. It is entirely safe to say that all American employers and insurance companies of any consequence have been for now many years completely informed about these matters.

Nullification of common law in Quebec.

The arrangment between the Quebec Asbestos Corporation and Lucien Nadeau despoils the "baggers" and "pilers" of the right which Amer-

...ngerous occupations have exercised ...ch salutary effects. In other words, the ...bec Asbestos Corporation has been, and is, almost completely protected by way of this arrangement from the possibility of damage suits by the men who have prepared, or who are now preparing, asbestos fibre for shipment out of its plant. And let us remember that these are the men who perform the dustiest and most dangerous work in the plant.

There are many men in this category at East Broughton who have legitimate claims in common law for irreparable damage committed upon them, and conditions in the plant are such that their number will be substantially augmented in the not distant future. Some of these men have already died, their rights to bring suit for damage having devolved upon their families. But, even if any of these practically penniless people had the money to pay for legal services, it is doubtful that any lawyer would undertake to bring damage suit on their behalf.

To illustrate the above: let us use the case of Joseph again. Let us assume that sometime in the next five years, or for good measure, the next ten years, Joseph becomes incapacitated for work and fatally ill, as he surely will if he continues to inhale asbestos dust in the quantity he has been inhaling these last four years. Should Joseph decide to bring damage suit in Court, when he becomes ill, he must sue his legal employer, Lucien Nadeau. But if he should win his case against Mr. Nadeau, he cannot collect the $15,000 to $25,000 and more usually awarded by the Courts in such cases in the U.S., since Mr. Nadeau does not have the money to pay even a small part of such sums, little enough in exchange for life or health. One might say that Joseph could then institute suit for damage against the Quebec Asbestos Corporation, seeking thereby to establish joint responsibility of the Company. But Joseph's legal problem will be infinitely more complicated than that.

Lucien Nadeau has been an "employer" for only a short time. As a "bagger" at the Quebec Asbestos Corporation plant, Joseph has already worked for three such "employers", and before he becomes ill he will probably work for two or three more such. Therefore, legal responsibility for any damage incurred by Joseph will rest upon Lucien Nadeau and four, five or six other such "employers". To present his claim for damage to a Court, Joseph will need to sue

each and all of his "employers", that is to say, a number of practically penniless men. Furthermore, the men set-up as "employers" by the Quebec Asbestos Corporation are usually much older than the "baggers" and "pilers"; very often they are men who, like Lucien Nadeau, have become incapacitated for work. One such "employer" is even now seriously ill at East Broughton. Thus one or more of Joseph's "employers" may quite probably be dead by the time Joseph becomes ill enough to sue for damage. To say the least, it is very difficult to make good a claim for damage against a dead man, since the Court must hear the other side of the story before it can pronounce judgment.

One might say that Joseph could, on becoming ill, sue the Quebec Asbestos Corporation and the whole lot of his "employers", all at one and the same time. This is a prospect that would make almost any lawyer faint outright. Responsibility for any damage that may come to Joseph from inhalation of asbestos dust has been so dispersed that he would have practically no chance at all of collecting even a penny by way of Courts of Law designed to protect basic human rights.

Conclusions

To sum up. The arrangements between the Quebec Asbestos Corporation and such "contractors" as Lucien Nadeau bring about the following results:

1) The Company saves money by throwing the burden of protecting the "baggers" and "pilers" from inhalation of asbestos dust upon a number of dummy "employers", none of whom can assume that burden.

2) The Company is almost completely protected from damage suits which these men might institute in Court against it, this aspect of the issue having become entangled in legalities which, if not insurmountable, would require many years of costly litigation to disentangle.

3) The inalienable right to protection which each of these "baggers" and "pilers" possesses in common law is grossly violated and nullified at every step in the game.

4) These men are completely helpless, and this through no fault of their own.

5) Worthy, respectable and meritorious men such as Lucien Nadeau are used as unwitting tools to visit abuse upon their fellow-workers.

Another group of men who work in the plant operated by the Quebec Asbestos Corporation, but who are not employed by the company.

This group of eight men known as "loaders" work for a special dummy employer set up by the Company. Their job is to handle the bags filled with asbestos fibre from the time they leave the bagging room up to the time they have been loaded on freight cars. This is strenuous work, and must be classified as among the most dangerous in the plant. These men are not provided with masks or other protection against the dust, and — but there is no point in telling the dismal story again. What has been written here about "baggers" and "pilers" applies equally to the "loaders".

— V —

EAST BROUGHTON, A SEMI-CLOSED TOWN

The pattern of rule that has prevailed at East Broughton was set some twenty five years ago by the general manager of the Quebec Asbestos Corporation, Mr. E. E. Spafford. At that time, none of the villagers had the slightest inkling that the dense clouds of asbestos dust that rolled down upon the village were dangerous to their health. But this dust was an enervating nuisance, and it dirtied their homes, inside and outside.

A worthy citizen of the village, a Mr. Eleuthère Groleau, had built upon his property a small building in which he prepared maple syrup and maple sugar for market. He and his family depended in part on this small business for livelihood. But no matter how tightly closed he kept the windows and doors, asbestos dust sifted into the building, got into his syrup and spoiled large batches of it. After this nuisance had gone on for some time, Mr. Groleau announced that if it were not stopped, he would bring damage suit against the Company. His declaration spread throughout the village, and became known to the management of the Company. Whereupon, mine and plant ceased operations abruptly. And throughout the ranks of the villagers there spread mysteriously, or otherwise, the rumor that mine and plant would not be reopened until Mr. Groleau had renounced his intention to bring suit. The situation held there for a few days, and until a large number of the workers thrown out of their jobs got together and appeared as a group before Mr. Groleau's door, demanding that he withdraw his complaint. Under this kind of pressure, Mr. Groleau acceded to their demand. Thereupon, mine and plant reopened, the men went back to work, and Mr. Groleau continued to pocket his losses as best he could.

This experience has had an important and lasting effect upon the psychology of the workers and their families. They have since lived in paralyzing fear of losing their work. So swift and so decisive was the Company's action that it has never found it necessary actually to close mine and plant again in order to impose its will upon the people of East Broughton. Reports that the Company would close its mine and plant have been sufficient to smother at birth any idea contemplated by the workers to better their conditions. Through fear inspired by such reports, the Company has been able to rule the town absolutely insofar as its own interests have been concerned.

The most amazing feature of this situation is that no political leader of any description has ever told the people of East Broughton the following indisputable facts: This Quebec Asbestos Corporation is owned by the Philip Carey Mfg. Co. which, to carry on its vast business in the U. S. and Canada, is absolutely dependent upon the asbestos produced in East Broughton. Without that asbestos, this Philip Carey Mfg. Co. — assets now 27 millions dollars—could not have continued to pile up the very large yearly profits it has in the past; it could not even have bought the asbestos it needed from other producers in Quebec or anywhere else, and at the same time have held its position against competitors to its products. There has never existed the slightest possibility during the time under review that the Quebec Asbestos Corporation would close its mine and plant for more than a very short time indeed.

This situation prevails today. Asbestos fibre is the life blood of the Philip Carey Co. Any threat to close its mine and plant is a bluff, pure and simple. For the carrying out of that threat, and holding to it for more than a short time means the collapse of the Philip Carey Co. The neighborhood of East Broughton is extremely rich in still unexploited reserves of this valuable mineral in immense demand. And there is not the slightest possibility that exploitation of this source of tremendous wealth will be halted by the Company itself for more than a month or two at most.

There may be a tendency on the part of a few readers to blame the people of East Broughton, since it is clear that simple determined action on their part could in a very short time have brought this Quebec Asbestos-Philip Carey combine under control. But, no one has told these people the facts necessary for them to know be-

fore they can take intelligent action. Newspapers, books and libraries in which they could learn the facts have not been available to them. These men have large families to support, and the one reality they know well is the spectre of near-famine that has appeared on the threshold of so many Quebec homes during the last generations. The paraphenalia of democracy — elections, representation in the Quebec Legislature and in the Canadian Parliament — has utterly failed them, and this through no fault of their own or of democracy. Under these circumstances, they alone could not be expected to solve the social problem created at East Broughton by the Quebec Asbestos-Philip-Carey combine.

Harbinger of revolt (?)

The anatomy of revolution since the beginning of time has been the object of many scientific studies, and one of the primary conclusions that has emerged is that women are usually at the bottom of revolution. Since revolutions are almost invariably the result of abuse that threatens or destroys the lives of the abused, it must be expected that women will play by far the most prominent role in inspiring them. For it is the peculiar function of women to carry new life and to protect existing life. Their principal drives are centered upon that function. The women of East Broughton run true to form. None of these people of East Broughton are completely informed regarding the damage caused directly and indirectly by asbestos dust. But they suspect that grave damage to life is being brought about by the dust, and the women have been much more outspoken about this than have the men. The suspicions of the women were sufficient to bring about what must be termed radical action indeed, considering the customs and mores of Quebec.

There was great excitement in East Broughton on the day of May 7th, 1915. The Municipal Council was scheduled to hold its monthly meeting that evening. These meetings are open to the public, but so far no woman or women in a group had been known to attend them at East Broughton. Early on the morning of that day, three or four women circulated separately in their immediate neighborhood, knocked at doors, and urged the woman of the house to attend the Municipal Council meeting, and demand that action be taken to put an end to the menace of asbestos dust at East Broughton.

In an hour or two, dozens of women were likewise circulating throughout the village, each bent on gathering recruits, and the movement assumed the spontaneity always present in revolution. Word of the movement reached the ears of the Mayor, who, according to report, was displeased and set up a counter-movement. A very few women were persuaded to circulate the village, and urge other women not to attend the meeting. And all through the day movement battled against counter-movement, while the town was as filled by rumors and arguments as it was by asbestos dust.

That evening, about seventy-five women marched into the Municipal Council Chamber, and took their places in it. Most of the wives of the workers were absent, because of fear their husbands would loose their jobs; but the women who did attend were secure in the knowledge that their action met with the approval of the overwhelming number of workers' wives. The Council was called to order by the Mayor, all the Counsellors being present. All of these men were greatly surprised by these mass appearance of women, and some of them resented what they considered an intrusion. One after another, ten or twelve women got up on their feet and addressed the Council in no uncertain terms, and according to all accounts, they spoke well. Proceedings throughout were orderly, but debate waxed spiritedly and voices rose high. Late in the meeting, one of the Counsellors introduced a resolution calling upon the Quebec Asbestos Corporation to ameliorate the dust conditions caused by it. The resolution was approved by the majority of the Counsellors, and copies were sent to each of the following: the Quebec Asbestos Corporation; the Philip Carey Mfg. Co., the provincial Department of Health, and the County Bureau of Hygiene. After which everyone went home, all agreeing that the resolution would not have been approved if the women had not been present to push it through.

A day or so afterwards, the Mayor of East Broughton evidently visited the offices of Mr. Spafford. On returning from the interview, he reported (in the hearing of a number of witnesses) that Mr. Spafford had said essentially the following: "Do these people forget what happened when Eleuthère Groleau protested against dust conditions?" which was to say, "withdraw the resolution or I close mine and plant". Few in East Broughton had not heard the warning by nightfall.

On May 21st, the Municipal Council received a letter from Mr. Spafford, asking what proportion of the population was complaining about the dust.

And on May 24th, the Municipal Council received an ultimatum from Mr. Spafford that was generally taken to mean that the mine and plant would be closed, if the resolutions were not withdrawn. So far as can be learned, the Municipal Council did not reply officially to Mr. Spafford's letters.

At the next meeting of the Council, women again marched into the Council Chamber. They numbered about thirty, discouragement and fear having taken its toll. But this time, the women were truly angry, and much more excitement resulted. They were asked to wait; and the Mayor threatened to resign if women continued to attend Council meetings. Everyone went home good and mad. But as time went on, fewer and fewer women attended the meetings, and the whole movement petered out, this being helped along by the planted rumor to the effect that the Company could not afford to install dust eliminating devices, since asbestos deposits were practically exhausted, and that the mine could only be operated for another year or two at most. The resolution was eventually burried without benefit of public ceremony .

It would be a serious mistake to dismiss this action taken by the women of East Broughton as a trivial village incident of no concern to the remainder of the province. This is the way violent revolution begins. That the spontaneous movement initiated by these women petered out is almost customary in early stages of revolution. To cite but one example: the women of France had been set back a number of times before they inspired their men to tear down the Bastille stone by stone, and then set into motion "les sans-culottes".

If conditions are allowed to go on as they are, these women of East Broughton will recover from their set-back, and will not be denied.

— VI —

PROOF OF COMPANY AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITY

I cannot tell exactly how many years the Quebec Asbestos-Philip Carey combine and the provincial government have known the essential facts regarding the situation at East Broughton. If by any chance, they should claim they have not known these facts for many years, they are merely supplying us with evidence of incompetence so grave that the one should be deprived of its license to carry on business in Quebec, and the other of its office.

Fortunately, I have in hand irrefutable documentary evidence that Company officials, and provincial government officials, whether Union Nationale or Liberal, were fully informed regarding conditions in East Broughton for more than these last four years. Beginning 1944 and continuing to this last summer, citizens of East Broughton, individuals or groups of ten to eighty, have literally bombarded the Company and the Provincial government with complaints regarding asbestos dust at large in village, mine and plant. These complaints were formally answered by evasions of many kinds, and by promises that dust conditions would be modified. But all during this time and up to the writing of this article, never one concrete and practical act designed to put an end to even a part of the whole abuse described in this article. On the other hand, open and outright acts of terrorization have been visited upon these people of East Broughton; witness the section "Harbinger of Revolt (?)" in this article.

In 1944, 1945 and 1946, complaints made by citizens of East Broughton were answered formally in the name of the government chiefly by way of

letters signed by Dr. F. J. Tourangeau, director of the Division of Industrial Hygiene, Ministry of Public Welfare and Health. Evasions and promises of betterment piled up one upon another, some ten or more letters filled with what are generally known in Quebec as "chinoiseries", although it seems a pity to associate such behaviour with the distant Chinese people about whom we know relatively little.

On August 1rst, 1945, Dr. Jean Gregoire, Sous-Ministre, Ministry of Public Welfare and Health, began to try his hand at placating the people of East Broughton; he followed the same line pursued by Dr. Tourangeau. In the meantime, government doctors, and a government engineer named Sarto Plamondon, visited the village on a number of occasions. All through these episodes, these government authorities were in communication with Mr. Spafford, manager of the Quebec Asbestos Corporation, and with the Philip Carey Mfg. Co.

From the correspondence in my possession, these government officials emerge as glorified messenger boys of the Quebec Asbestos-Philip Carey combine. For their line was to spread about the usual medley of promises, now reinforced by propaganda supposedly justifying the Company's unwillingness to install devices that would control or eliminate the asbestos dust at large in village, mine and plant. Eventually, the people of East Broughton tired of this pot-pourri of promises, evasions, and Company propaganda, passed out by government officials; protestations and demands rose in tone and in volume, all excuses for failure to remedy conditions being rejected.

During the first half of 1947, Dr. Tourangeau continued to carry the governement's burden of replying to demands made by East Broughton citizens. In this particular period, he was forced to send no less than twelve letters of explanation for failure to act; but since these letters were merely a stale rehash of old promises and evasions, they were received with considerable disfavor in the village. Apparently, the writing of these last twelve letters exhausted Dr. Tourangeau's resources, and he thereafter bowed out of the situation. Whereupon, Dr. Jean Gregoire, Dr. Albiny Paquette, Minister of Public Health, and Maurice Duplessis, Prime Minister, took over the burden of replying to the people of East Broughton.

Drs. Gregoire and Paquette followed the line established by Dr. Tourangeau, while Mr. Duples-

sis answered with mediocre political speeches on the merits of "L'Union Nationale", of which he is the leader, upon the devotion of his Minister of Health, Dr. Albiny Paquette, and upon the demerits of former Liberal governments.

To their credit, the people of East Broughton were not over-awed by letters from such high government officials, and several hot and capable replies were sent to Mr. Duplessis. On September 10th 1947, Dr. Gregoire bravely wrote (privately) — nothing about all this appeared in newspapers — that he had sent an ultimatum to the Quebec Asbestos Corporation. It seems that the Company was called on to specify within fifteen days what measures it proposed to take to eliminate the "nuisance" caused by the asbestos dust issuing from its plant at East Broughton. Otherwise, Dr. Gregoire wrote, the whole case of the Company would be refered to the Attorney-General — who happens to be no less than Mr. Duplessis himself.

On October 15th, 1947, Dr. Gregoire wrote (privately) that the case *had been placed* in the hands of the Attorney-General. For some reason unknown to me, perhaps for good measure, he again announced (privately) that such action had been taken. And there the case rests today, apparently either stuck in the hands of the Attorney-General, or quite possibly in the same pigeon-hole where the now famous "Procès des Veuves de St. Remi d'Amherst" has rested these last eight years.

The documentary evidence considered in this section uncovers much more than another dreary story of betrayal of public interest by politicians in Quebec.

The information and complaints that poured into the provincial Department of Health from East Broughton citizens dealt for the larger part with asbestos dust conditions in the village, and only secondarily with dust conditions in mine and plant. In the main, these citizens were fighting to protect their property, which is damaged in many ways by the asbestos dust belched out by the plant, and they were also concerned with the dirty nuisance brought about by the dust that seeped into their homes. However, on many occasions they did call attention in general terms to the unhealthy aspects of the whole situation.

It must be remembered that none of there East Broughton citizens is sufficiently educated in medical matters to talk with authority on the dangers of inhalation of asbestos dust. Nevertheless so capably did they describe asbestos dust conditions at East Broughton that any doctor should have grasped the full implication of their story at once. Moreover, the doctors especially charged with the guardianship of public health in Quebec verified their story on the spot, not only once but many times. In other words, Drs. F.-J. Tourangeau, Jean Gregoire and Albiny Paquette, knew all the essential facts in the whole situation at East Broughton, knew what dust conditions were in the village and in the mine and plant, and knew well the deadly effects brought about by inhalation of asbestos dust over a period of time. What then did they do; what did they not do; and what should they have done?

What Drs. Tourangeau, Gregoire and Paquette did.

In their correspondence with East Broughton villagers, these doctors concerned themselves only with the asbestos dust poured down into the village by the plant. They tell these villagers that efforts will be made to eliminate the "nuisance" caused by asbestos dust at large in the village — "nuisance" being a strange word indeed to use in connection with this deadly dust.

What Drs. Tourangeau, Gregoire, and Paquette did not do.

In their correspondence with East Broughton citizens, these doctors not only failed to distinguish between dust conditions in the village and in the mine and plant. They failed to tell these uninformed people the essential facts regarding inhalation of asbestos dust.

What Drs. Tourangeau, Gregoire, and Paquette should have done.

These doctors should have told these people of East Broughton that the asbestos dust almost continuously at large in the western end of the village was a serious danger to the health of its inhabitants, especially the children. They should have added that this dust was hastening the deaths of the very many already afflicted by asbestosis and by other pulmonary disease. They should have gone into this village and condemned certain homes and public [illegible] as centers of pestil[illegible]

long ago have condemned as highly unsanitary the schoolhouse that lies in the path of the asbestos dust belched out by the plant on the hill. They should, in fact, have condemned the whole western end of the village as unfit for habitation by man or beast.

These doctors should have told these people of East Broughton that the asbestos dust saturating the atmosphere of the mine and plant is an infinitely greater peril to their welfare than is the dust at large in the village. They should have told all these people, and especially the workers, the essential facts regarding inhalation of asbestos dust over a period of time. They should have told these workers that conditions at the Quebec Asbestos Corporation mine and plant are productive of asbestosis and of pulmonary tuberculosis to a terribly high degree. They should have encouraged these workers, who have been paralyzed by an understandable fear and by a lack of accurate information, to take drastic and immediate action to protect their lives and those of their families. All this should have been said publicly *again and again* in clear, simple terms which these East Broughton people could understand by men such as Drs. Tourangeau, Gregoire and Paquette, who enjoy the authority, the prestige and the rewards of high office, or by equally informed medical men whom they could have nominated.

These doctors, especially and conclusively charged by law to protect the health of the public, should likewise have formally and accurately informed the Municipal Council of East Broughton, and also, all officers and personnel of "La Fédération de l'Amiante".

There is not the slightest intention here, or even inclination, to sit in judgment upon the behaviour of the doctors charged with the administration of the Department of Public Health in Quebec. But no one can dodge the following fact: gross malpractice of medicine is one of the causes for much of the tragedy of East Broughton. The issue is therefore clear: either these doctors are themselves responsible for such malpractice of medicine, or politico-financial authority beyond their control has prevented them from practicing their profession according to its ideals. This is a matter which should engage the close, immediate and public attention of "Le Collège des Médecins de Québec".

— VII —

THE QUEBEC ASBESTOS-PHILIP CAREY COMBINE

The Quebec Asbestos Corporation is entirely owned by the Philip Carey Mfg. Co. of Lockland (near Cincinnati) Ohio. Official reports regarding the exact profits derived by the Quebec Asbestos-Philip Carey combine from operation of the mine and plant at East Broughton are not available to the public. Nevertheless, one may make the following statements, secure in the knowledge that they cannot be successfully contradicted.

The Philip Carey Mfg. Co. has drawn enormous profits from the asbestos mine and plant it owns at East Broughton. This company started upon its career on a relatively small amount of capital. Its stockholders have been rewarded from time to time with very large stock or capital dividends; they have also received exceedingly generous cash dividends. In addition, the assets of this Company have steadily and largely increased in value, and now reach the sum of 27 million dollars. Annual net profits held at high levels during the war, averaging about $775,000.

Net profit took a very big jump upwards to $2,149,411 for the year 1946; and then took another jump upwards to $2,806,692 for the year 1947. This is a very prosperous Company.

Not all of the profit already disbursed to its stock and bondholders by the Philip Carey Mfg. Co., and not all of the capital gains now part of the assets of the Company, flow from its operations at East Broughton. But a large part, perhaps the largest part, of both these two categories of profit do flow directly from the asbestos fibre produced at East Broughton. It is believed here that few persons in Quebec, or for that matter in Canada and in the U.S., would oppose the idea of the Philip Carey Mfg. Co. collecting a profit

from its operations at East Broughton. But that is not the issue here; the issue is one of proportion. For in its search for profit, the Management of this Company has lost all sense of decent proportion. Without in any way endangering its own existence, or even its very large annual profits, this Company could have easily afforded to have spent the money necessary to safeguard the health and lives of the men who have worked on its premises at East Broughton. Blindly and greedily, the Management of the Company rejected such an idea. This is not a strange phenomen in human relations. Man, or groups of men, will run wild, unless they are held under control by law, clearly defined and enforced. Despite grave shortcomings, the law in Quebec is clearly enough defined to have enabled the Government to have kept this Quebec Asbestos-Philip Carey combine under control. But the law has not been, and is not being enforced. Therefore, responsibility for the hideous situation under study here rests as much upon the Quebec provincial government as it does upon the Quebec Asbestos-Philip Carey combine

Much of the literature critical of the behaviour of incorporated companies in Canada and the U. S. is sprinkled profusely with the terms "compagnie anonyme" and "the souless corporation". The first term is a legalism, and the second an emotionalism, and use of either or both are handicaps in effort to remedy conditions under study. This Quebec Asbestos Corporation is a legal facade, back of which a certain small and known group of men operate. These men are further entrenched behind another legal facade: the Philip Carey Mfg. Co. To remedy conditions at East Broughton, it will be necessary to disregard these legal facades—and this can be done without violation of existing law — and carry the battle directly to the men managing and controlling the combined companies. In other words, these two corporations are the tools of certain known men, and the real business of the Quebec people is not with the tools created and used by these men; it is with the men themselves. Who then are they?

The men directing the Philip Carey Mfg Co. constitute a group of industrialists highly respected in the United States. They are recognized as capable, enlightened, and highly successful operators, and their activities and interests range far beyond the Quebec Asbestos-Philip Carey combine. They are in fact associated with many important industrial and educational enterprises in

Ohio, and in other parts of the U. S. The association between the Philip Carey Mfg. Co. and Proctor & Gamble, one of the two or three largest soap manufacturers in the U. S., is particularly close.

Some of the more prominent and influential directors of the Philip Carey Mfg. Co. also occupy positions of equal importance on the board of directors of Proctor & Gamble — a state of affairs that has prevailed for many years. Proctor & Gamble is renowned throughout the U. S. for its humanitarian treatment of its employees.

My information regarding the Philip Carey Mfg. Co. is not quite so clear, insofar as its operations in the U. S. are concerned. But this much may be said. The plants operated by this company in Ohio handle a very large amount of asbestos fibre, and this without doubt represents a potential health hazard for its employees. So far as can be ascertained, operations of this company *in Ohio* have not produced any cases of asbestosis — and this must mean that the Management takes measures to protect its American employees from the disease.

In summary: a certain small specific group of men have maintained working conditions in the plants it manages in Ohio so as to avoid the production of asbestosis in its employees. On the other hand, this same small group of men have permitted in its Quebec mine and plant conditions which have produced asbestosis and pulmonary tuberculosis on a large scale. Why then this discrepancy in behaviour?.

The answer is as simple as A-B-C. In the U. S. and specifically in Ohio, the American government and people have enforced their will upon this group of operators, and have compelled it to maintain healthy working conditions. The situation is otherwise in Quebec, where this group of men has imposed *ITS* will upon the government. To remedy this situation, it will be necessary for the people of Quebec to rouse its government out of the lethargy that has permitted the existence of a human slaughter house up on the hill at East Broughton.

Burton LcDoux