FILE NAME: WR Grace (WRG)

DATE: June 27, 1961 & October 21, 1964

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DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: 1961 1964 Correpsondence on workers comp claims

June 27, 1961

11 years accepted
46.57

Mr. William L. Baillie
Jardine, Stephenson, Blewett & Weaver
First National Bank Building
Great Falls, Montana

Re: Zonolite Company
William E. Airth

Dear Bill:

In reply to your letter of June 21 concerning the above-named, I think that you are correct in your assumption that no claim has actually been filed with the Industrial Accident Board. None has been filed with us.

This man's attorney came to the office and talked with me after our last phone discussion on the case. I think it was obvious that he knew that he did not have any grounds for a claim because he kept asking me whether our company would make any sort of a settlement. I told him that we pay insurance premiums so that our insurance company will accept the responsibility of handling any claims of this nature. There was no point in our discussing any sort of a settlement, that his only recourse would be to file a claim with you.

I gave him your address and told him that it would be necessary for him to contact you as you are the adjuster for our insurance company in Montana.

He took your address and I was of the opinion that he would have contacted you before this because it was some time ago that we had our conversation. Again, I feel that he knows that they have no claim against us, but he was just feeling us out to see whether any settlement of any sort could be made. For reasons obvious to you, I am sure we realize that we cannot make any settlement and certainly would never agree to make one ona voluntary basis. Copies of the letter were given to me from this man's doctor, the first one dates May 11, 1960 and the latest March 30, 1961. From these it would appear that he is not pushing us very hard.

Sincerely yours

M. Baskett M.D.

OCT 25 1954

GOVERNMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF ALBERTA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

EDMONTON, ALBERTA,

21.10.54.

Mr. T.A. Williams,
Manager Grant Industries,
Division of Eddy Match Co.,
4030 - 8th Street,
CALGARY Alberta.

Dear Mr. Williams,

In May of this year this division initiated a survey of men working in dusty trades including coal mines workers, brick tile, potteries and ceramics plants, gravel crushing, lime and cement workers, etc.in order to secure quickly a picture of problems involved and conditions leading to them. About 900 men were given breathing tests and had 14 by 17 inch chest X-rays done.

Among these men were nine working in your Zonolite plant at Calgary. Of them 7 produced forced breathing curves suggesting some degree of faulty breathing. Of these 7 the radiologist of the Baker Memorial Sanatorium at Calgaryreported two as showing evidence of pulmonary fibrosis, two as having emphysema, one having both fibrosis and emphysema and two with no abnormalities. None of the nine had active tuberculosis.

This number of men with breathing abnormalities in a group of nine is most unusual and puzzling. The materials used in the production of Zonolite are not generally considered harmful except where ground asbestos is added which is done in your plant only occasionally. However, several authorities have reported pneumoconiosis resulting from exposure to mica dusts. Since vermiculite is a micaceous material this leaves us somewhat uneasy. We are oft the opinion that a more detailed study of these men by a chest specialist would be desireable. This of course would involve not only the expenditure of money but also the cooperation of the men concerned. We would welcome your comments on this problem

We would also be interested in knowing whether

you have the results of investigations similar to ours available from the other Western Canadian plants expanding vermiculite. Enquiries have gone out from this office for further information on the effects of mica dusts on the lungs and lung functions of workers.

In the meantime it would seem desirable to consider the advisability of the men in the Calgary plant wearing respirators until more definite conclusions regarding the problem can be reached.

A paragraph by our Chief Chemist, Dr. H. Buchwald, is attached, dealing with our visit to the Calgary Zonolite plant in September '64 and the examination of the dust samples collected at that time.

We wish to express our appreciation of the courtesies and help extended to us by your Supervisor of the Zonolite plant, Mr. Schuldt, and Mr. Ralph White, Engineer on your staff, at the time of our September visit.

Yours very truly,

H. Simons, M.D.,
Director, Division of Industrial Health,
328 Administration Bldg.

P.S. An extra copy of this letter is enclosed should you require it.