

MEMORANDUM

May 25, 1945

DR. LANZA

SUBJECT: Survey of Canadian Johns-Manville Operations at
Asbestos, Quebec, May 9, 1945 to May 17, 1945. ✓

I learned, soon after arrival, that there were eight cases, claiming asbestosis, filed with the Industrial Commission of Quebec. These cases originated in both the factory and mill.

Mr. Sherry, General Superintendent is ill and hospitalized in Montreal. In his place there has been set up a Mines Steering Committee headed by Mr. G. K. Foster as Chairman. This Committee dictates the policies of the mine and mill, while Mr. R. S. Gardner, Superintendent of the factory, guides the policies of the factory. By this set up of management control, the mine and mill function technically as one unit while the factory operates as a separate enterprise.

On Friday, May 11, 1945, Mr. Foster invited Mr. Redlin, Mr. Petrick and me to a dinner meeting at the Iroquois Hotel in Asbestos. Mr. L. V. Cooper, in charge of maintenance of mines, Mr. Dealey mill foreman, Dr. K. W. Smith, and Mr. C. M. McGaw, personnel director, were also present. No representative of the factory attended this meeting.

Matters discussed were:

1. The advisability of taking periodic dust samples.
2. The method of sampling to be used.
3. The training of personnel for taking dust samples and making dust counts.

Mr. McGaw raised the question as to whether there should be one or two committees appointed to guide management regarding industrial health problems and the elimination of dust. Mr. Foster replied that he would leave that up to the New York Office.

On Saturday, May 12, while we were surveying the factory, Mr. Gardner asked Mr. Redlin, Mr. Petrick and me to have lunch with him and Mr. Molson. At lunch he asked us if we could arrange to meet with him and his staff on Tuesday afternoon at 3:30 in the conference room at the factory. The following attended the conference on Tuesday, May 13:

Mr. A. E. Rathgeb, Ventilating Engineer, Johns-Manville, Manville, N.J.
Mr. J. E. Fehnel, Industrial Hygiene Laboratory and Field Services, M.I.C.O.
Mr. A. J. Redlin, Technician at Saranac Laboratory.
Mr. P. A. Petrick, Metropolitan Life Insurance Company.

Dr. R. H. Stevenson, Head Doctor, Canadian Johns-Manville.
Dr. K. W. Smith, Assistant to Dr. Stevenson.
Mr. F. H. Molson, Assistant Factory Superintendent.
Mr. A. D. Tector, Department Head.
Mr. A. J. Morrison, Department Head.
Mr. W. A. McGinnis, Department Head.
Mr. E. L. Gilbert, Department Head.
Mr. A. S. Gardner, Factory Superintendent.
Mr. G. M. McGaw, Personnel Director.

At this meeting on Tuesday, Mr. Gardner stated that he had discussed with me various phases of control for potential health hazards in the plant and that he agreed with all my criticisms, and wished to correct these conditions. It was his opinion that the lack of action to control these conditions was due to:

1. The lack of help for janitor service.
2. The increased production and demands of the Production Department.
3. The laxity of their own management to take action to correct the conditions enumerated in previous reports.
4. The procedure necessary for submitting the plans and their approval by the New York Office.

Mr. Gardner stated that these were not offered as excuses, but were factors that enter into the regular routine of factory management. Mr. Gardner remarked that he felt that the Canadian Johns-Manville operations had one common problem and that was dust control and elimination. For that reason, he favored one committee to outline and guide the industrial health program. He then asked for suggestions as to how this program could be carried out. I suggested that, first of all, a list of raw materials at present in use in both the factory and the mill be submitted to the Medical Director for his guidance in determining whether there was an exposure to health hazards of employees using these materials in the normal procedure of manufacture. I also suggested that this list should be kept up to date, and all new materials brought into the plant should be reported immediately to the Medical Director, outlining the way in which they were to be used.

The second consideration is a good industrial hygienist who could not only make the dust surveys, take the samples, make the counts, but could also evaluate any industrial health problems. This person should be well-grounded in biochemistry and microscopic technique, and should be under the direct supervision of the Medical Director. The hygienist would be a valuable aid to the medical set-up in making necessary tests to aid in diagnosis, such as blood chemistry tests, urinalysis, blood counts, etc. The amount of work involved in dust counting is not sufficient to occupy a good technician full time. For that reason, he could be kept in training by doing the blood counting work which is along lines similar to dust counting technique.

The industrial hygienist should at all time cooperate with the ventilation engineer assigned to design and install corrective measures for the control of health hazards. The Medical Director should familiarise himself with all plant operations and can readily do this with the cooperation of the industrial hygienist.

This plan was endorsed immediately by Mr. Gardner, Dr. Stephenson, Dr. Smith, and Mr. Rathgeb. Dr. Stephenson stated that he also was in favor of one committee, if for no other reason than to cut down the time necessary for the Medical Director to cooperate fully. He stated that if two committees were planned he would normally have to spend four half days a month in attending their regular meetings.

I also suggested that the committee should not only take into consideration potential health hazards and their elimination, but should make a study of safety hazards. The safety procedures in the factory and mill are lax. It was noticed that there was a great deal of fooling and horseplay among the employees. Make-shift guards have been placed as protection for certain moving parts and belts, and there is careless piling of stock and materials in the factory. Aisles and passageways are often blocked with materials and trucks.

Before leaving Asbestos, on Thursday, May 17, I was informed that Mr. Foster made the statement that he was able to sell Mr. Woodard in New York the idea of two committees, with two men engaged in dust counting under each committee. It seems to me that this is a duplication and a waste of time and energy. Dust counting alone will not be a solution to the problem and it is not necessary to make periodic checks oftener than about four times a year in order to evaluate the effect of seasonal weather changes on the dust concentration in the mill and factory.

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Industrial Hygiene Laboratory