PLAINTIFF'S EXHIBIT

SA-420

Mr. Cummings

S.F.W.

51132

June 4, 1932

Professor Philip Drinker
Harvard University
School of Public Health
55 Van Dyke Street
Boston, Massachusetts

Dear Mr. Drinker:

Please pardon my delay in replying to your letter of May 13 in which you mention the fact that you and Mr. Donald Cummings would like to obtain, if possible, a lung from a fatal case of asbestosis. I should be very glad to help you in every possible way in this connection.

It is true that we have had three fatalities from asbestosis that we were able to obtain autopsies upon, partly through personal efforts and partly by the assistance of Dr. Timothy Leary. I think I recall that one of these cases went to autopsy before I last visited Saranac Laboratories and I mentioned the fact to Dr. Gardner who expressed a desire to obtain autopsy material from such cases.

For years our Claims Department has used the services of Dr. Leary as a pathologist and he was very much interested in the asbestosis problem in a medical way. In two of the cases, Dr. Leary himself, performed the autopsies and has been using the material for a personal study of the subject.

While the question of liability was of course promptly determined in at least two of these cases, the results of the medical study of the fundamental pathology have not been published by Dr. Leary so far as I know and I have been awaiting his conclusions with considerable interest. I recall that Dr. Leary visited Saranac Laboratories about a year ago while he was working on the first of these cases.

As soon as I have opportunity, I am going to see whether or not Dr. Leary will be able to turn over some of this material to you and Mr. Cummings. I do not personally feel that a study of the basic pathology is purely an academic one. We certainly need, from the industry standpoint, all of the knowledge that the study of cases can bring to light. The whole situation on pneumoconiosis, as you know very well yourself, is developing widespread interest throughout the country. I greatly regret the handicaps that you specialists have to struggle under in respect to adequate funds and autopsy material from fatal cases. Of course, everybody is handicapped for funds in these extraordinary times but I see no excuse at all for the legal situation that does not permit the use of autopsy material, merely because of the personal feelings of the relatives of the individuals who died from this hazard.

Since the entirely proper but wholly ignorant feelings of the relatives of such victims of the industry need be no more offended than they are at present by the standard procedure in the embalming of all bodies, I strongly feel that Industrial Accident Boards should be given the legal authority to require autopsies in all of these more or less intangible cases of occupational disease. This would not only accelerate our understanding of the pathology involved, but also enable the liability to be established on a fair basis instead of leaving the decision to technical opinion which is always more or less a handicap as the situation now exists.

I hope to get in touch with you again in the course of a few days.

Very truly yours,

S. H. Whiting
Asst. Chief Engineer

SHW:MH

CC - Mr. Donald Cummings
Saranac Laboratories
Saranac Lake, New York