For years, like most companies, we had had a Safety Department, but, as in many top managements, interest was chiefly in terms of insurance costs, not in terms of human obligations. We had no medical department. It is only in recent years we have realized that any expense which makes a plant safer and healthier is a good investment as well as an obligation.

Our Medical Department started in 1932 and we learned much about bad conditions in Brake Shoe from our first doctor. Looking back, I realize that we had little idea of how far we fell short in giving our people proper working conditions. It took something like an earthquake to do the trick and we are still ashamed of the fact that it was a money scare which woke us up.

The year was 1933. The company was in red ink for the first time in its history. Returning from a plant visiting trip to the Pacific Coast, a telegram was handed me in Omaha. It read: "Silicosis suits totaling $2,700,000 have been filed on behalf of 34 Chicago Heights employees."

I had a lot more hours of train ride to think that over. This was only one of our 39 foundries. Our tangible net worth was under $25,000,000. For a while I comforted myself with the racket angle.

During the next few months we did not enjoy the lawsuits. It <u>was</u> a racket, but plant conditions were far from right. Today I know these suits were one of the best things that could have happened to Brake Shoe. I don't believe this story of final full awakening is unique with us. I fear it is typical. Without question ethical and unethical lawyers have helped clean up a lot more plants than we enjoy giving them credit for. The man who cross-examined Dr. Lanza was actually blazing a trail for our progress.

SPNY 005772