

113/1679

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ASBESTOSIS.

A number of new employees are worried because they have been told the asbestos industry "is not healthy" or "the asbestos dust gets on your chest". It is for such people this leaflet is written. The Directors are convinced that a plain statement of fact will do much towards ending their anxiety.

Most industries have a physical risk involved in some of their processes. It may be the danger of serious or fatal accidents, of various forms of chemical poisoning, of cancer, of tuberculosis or of silicosis.

In the asbestos industry there is some liability to asbestosis, a form of lung trouble very like silicosis. Fortunately asbestosis has been recognised as an industrial disease since 1931 and its cause is known. It has resulted from workpeople breathing asbestos dust either in a thick concentration or for a long period. If there were no asbestos dust there could be no asbestosis, and, with this in mind, important steps have been taken since 1931:

1. Special ventilation has been provided in the Factory to draw off the dust from the process and prevent it reaching the operator. Anyone who has already seen the inside of these Works will appreciate how much has been done in this way.
2. Certain processes can be damped so that dust is not created. This is especially so with the warp in weaving operations which would otherwise create quite a volume of dust.
3. Everyone employed in an asbestos area is examined regularly by the Asbestosis Medical Board to make sure he or she is fit for work. Anyone incapacitated through asbestosis comes ^{under} a Compensation scheme. Similarly if an employee or ex-employee dies at any time and asbestosis is found to have contributed to his death, compensation is paid by the Company.

Of 71 cases of asbestosis at these Works (62 men and 9 women) since 1931, only one was an employee who started since 1931 i.e. since the new developments in ventilation etc.

It would be good to be able to state that it was now definitely impossible for anyone starting here to begin to develop asbestosis, but in spite of all the evidence in support of this, enough years have not yet passed to make this a fair statement. It must remain for some while longer merely a confident opinion. All that can be said so far is that the risk during the first 10 - 12 years of service appears negligible.

Finally, the Rochdale climate and the industrial history of Lancashire gives rise to a great deal of bronchial trouble which has nothing to do with asbestos. It might prevent much needless worry if it were known that:

1. it is not and never has been possible to contract asbestosis in places such as the Rubber Division and the Canteen.
2. chest trouble arising soon after joining the Company cannot be asbestosis.
3. any employee seriously worried about his or her health in relation to the work can readily apply through the Employment Department for a special medical examination either by the Works Medical Officer or by the Asbestosis Medical Board at their next visit.

M. B. Oliver.

PLAINTIFF'S
EXHIBIT
IN 4693