FABA (114)

JMcN/MJ

Dr. B. Candevia,
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The Prince Henry Hospital,
LITTLE BAY, N.S.W.

2nd September, 1965

Dear Bryan,

Thank you for your letter.

The party's appreciation of the Wittenoom trip was ample reward for whatever effort went into the organisation and the opportunity to discuss the occupational health problem was a welcome bonus.

If I was perhaps too forthright, I apologise. I can only plead over-enthusiasm.

I did not bother to ask you to add my question to Janet Elder's paper but feel that some note should be taken of the fact that the so called atypical asbestosis X-rays and sections she showed are probably due to complicated silicosis.

I have checked my information in regard to the rock formation at Wittenoom and confirmed that there is a high quartz content in the ore. A sample collected underground near the main mine exhaust contained particles ranging up to 12 mμ in size, average 1 mμ, and the approximate composition was magnetite 7%, hematite 33%, chalybite dolomite 15%, quartz, 42%, asbestos 3%. A sample collected near the mill exhaust system contained 22% quartz and 22% asbestos.

The question was framed as follows :

Q. Might any atypical X-ray and histological changes described be due to the associated high free silica content of the Wittenoom ore, causing a mixed disease, silicosis/asbestosis?

A. I don't think so. Careful examination revealed very few doubly refractile particles.

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PLAINTIFF'S EXHIBIT WV-04111

PLAINTIFF'S EXHIBIT 103660

The white asbestos mine I visited at Marble Bar was interesting. It was fairly dusty and posed a fresh problem on which I would appreciate your advice.

The ore body in which the white asbestos is interlaced is mainly serpentine. It is a soft rock. Mechanical teeth which would wear out in a week at Wittenoom last for years at this mine. There seems to be a certain amount of confusion geologically in regard to distinction between serpentine and chrysotile. However, for my purpose, the chrysotile is the fibrous asbestos and the serpentine is the soft rock which pulverises to dust and not to fibre.

Is it safe to assume that the serpentine is safe and in dust sampling, counting fibres is all that is necessary?

I know this is not exactly your field, but any help you could give will be greatly appreciated.

Don Letham would be very happy to have me spend some time in your unit. Unfortunately, it would be some time before I would be able to travel. In the meantime, I accept your offer gratefully and will keep in touch.

Kind regards.

Yours sincerely,

J. McNulty
PHYSICIAN
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