PLAINTIFF'S EXHIBIT
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)ITORIAL

hree-year health survey findings announced



)INGS of three-year survey into the health of present and former asbestos industry em-ees were announced to industry and union officials in the Thetford Mines City Hall late uary. The medical team included, from left, Dr. J.C. McDonald, Dr. Margaret Becklake, Slovodan Ducic, a Jugoslav observer, Dr. Alison McDonald and Mr. Graham Gibbs. in the research group but not in photo are Dr. Gisèle Fournier, from the University of brooke, and two statisticians.

results of a three-year y by a research team the Medical Faculty of ill University into the th of workers in Que-asbestos mining indus-suggest that, at present of dust exposure in ern asbestos mills, even ears employment would ably not carry any measu-e risk of lung cancer.

he influence of asbestos health has been the sub-of intensive research in y parts of the world main-ecause of the discovery in certain circumstan-exposure to the mineral may be related to can-of the lung and to meso-oma, a cancer of the ring of the lung.

pported by substantial s from the Institute of ational and Environ-mental Health of the Que-bec Asbestos Mining Asso-ciation as well as from the U.S. Public Health Service, the epidemiological studies formed part of an interna-tional research program coor-dinated by the Union Inter-nationale Contre le Cancer.

Headed by Dr. J.C. Mc-Donald, of McGill Univer-sity's Department of Epide-miology and Health, the in-ternational research team's investigations were aimed at assessing the risks of lung cancer to persons exposed to Canadian chrysotile asbestos. Another primary purpose was to review all aspects of the health of workers in Quebec's asbestos mines and mills to ensure that it is efficiently protected.

Preliminary findings of the report were released late Feb-ruary to asbestos industry man-agement and union representa-tives in Thetford Mines.

Dr. McDonald reported on the findings of a study of mor-tality and causes of death in some 12,000 industry employ-ees born between 1890 and 1920. According to the McGill epidemiologist, the survey showed that the 10 per cent of these employees who be-longed to the highest dust-ex-posure group had an overall death-rate about 12 per cent higher than the others, mainly due to asbestosis, lung can-cer and other respiratory com-plaints.

The lung cancer death-rate in this same group, he report-ed, was about three times higher than that of employees with minimal dust exposure. Seventy per cent of this group of employees belonged to the lowest dust exposure categories. They had little or no increased mortality from these diseases, he stated.

Number of cases small

"Two points must be em-phasized," Dr. McDonald de-clared. "First, that the dust exposure experienced by these workers occurred many years ago when environmental con-ditions in the asbestos mills were poorly controlled, and, second, that the total number of respiratory diseases attri-butable to asbestos was very small."

Results to date indicated, Dr. McDonald continued, that at present levels or dust ex-posure in today's asbestos mills even 30 years employment would probably not carry any measurable risk of lung can-cer.

Dr. McDonald then report-ed on the results of findings from surveys throughout Ca-nada of deaths due to meso-thelioma. During the 1960-68 period only 165 fatal cases had been recorded by patho-logists throughout the entire country, he stated.

Field inquiries confirmed that in a minority of cases there was a definite history of having worked with asbes-tos, he declared. "Almost all the histories were of expo-sure in the manufacture and industrial application of the mineral, rather than in the production of asbestos fibre.

"There was no increased number of cases whose con-tact was limited to residence in the neighborhood of asbes-tos mines or mills."



QUESTION-AND-ANSWER PERIOD followed the hour-long announcement of the findings, with topics ranging from the continuation of the health research program to new proce-dures for the periodic medical supervision of employees. Here C.J-M. haulage truck driver Edmond Delorme, vice-presi-dent of the Asbestos union, asks a question about health stu-dies on younger employees.

The two sets of results, the epidemiologist noted, confirm the association between occu-pational exposure to asbestos and these two varieties of respiratory cancer. "The re-sults are nevertheless encoura-ging," he said, "in that they suggest the risk is virtually confined to levels of dust exposure which are controll-able, if not already controll-ed, in most Canadian asbes-tos mines and mills."

Members of the medical re-search team included Drs. Alison McDonald and J. Cor-bett McDonald, epidemiolo-gists; Dr. Margaret Becklake, physiologist, Mr. Jack Siemi-atycki, statistician; Mr. Gra-ham Gibbs, environmental hy-gienist; Dr. Gisèle Fournier, physiologist at the University of Sherbrooke, and Mr. Char-les Rossiter, statistician with the British Medical Research Council.

Research Program to Continue

In light of the researchers' findings, Dr. McDonald re-ported, it has been decided to continue the research pro-gram, with [illegible] industry support, for a further five years.

The extended research pro-gram into the health of Que-bec's 6,000 asbestos workers will have these main objec-tives:

—To record and analyse deaths and their cause to enable the present approx-imate estimation of what constitutes a safe level of dust concentration to be mo-re accurately defined.

—Close surveillance over the occurrence of suspected me-sotheliomas in Canada, so as better to understand their cause. "Asbestos ex-posure has failed to ex-plain most of them and is probably not the only fac-tor when present," Dr. McDonald commented.

—In collaboration with the industrial clinics in Thetford Mines and Asbestos, it is planned to introduce new procedures for the regular periodic medical supervision