

FILE NAME: Colonial Sugar Refinery (CSR)

DATE: 1935

DOC#: CSR193

DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: Workers' Comp Claims Information

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT.	
93	33

Acc 1003

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

Subject: - Worker's Compensation Act.

Dangerous Industrial Processes and Diseases Arising Therefrom

P.H. ATTD.

Other Departments
Numbers.

Previous Papers see P.H. 7132/21

Further papers see P.H. 57-39.

NOT TO BE WRITTEN ON.

GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

P. A. S. 57A

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Box No. F. 256, G.P.O., Perth.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR.

OFFICE OF CHIEF INSPECTOR OF FACTORIES,
36 JAMES STREET.

PERTH, W.A. 24th May, 1935.

In replying please quote 178435.

THE COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC HEALTH.

re Suggested medical examination
of certain employees in Asbestos
Works.

In reply to the queries contained in your memorandum of the 15th instant, Reference L.H.D. 93/33, I have to advise that I am unable to say whether the work performed at Hardie's Asbestos Works comes within the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act. It is, however, reported to me that the Manager of the Works is aware that any disease or illness of a workman arising from his occupation in the works is possibly compensatable and that the worker is entitled to choose his own medical adviser. He (Mr. Witzag) has no objection to any of his employees being medically examined.

Mr. C. W. Wood of 20 Banksia Terrace, South Perth, who has been employed at the works for 10 years, found it necessary, after 5 years, to consult Doctor Wilson of South Perth. Wood was experiencing loss of appetite, tightness in chest, and coughing and was very subject to colds. During the past five years he has required and received medical attention on numerous occasions and at fairly frequent intervals. He was advised to drink milk in quantities and a concentrated form of cod liver oil "Halivol". On one occasion, in the absence of his usual medical adviser, he was informed by Dr. Muir that his illness was probably due to the nature of his employment and he advised him to leave it.

E. Evans of 7 Woolley Street, Bayswater, has been employed in the mixing and blending room for 10 years and states that he has not found it necessary to consult a doctor. He, however, as a precautionary measure, drinks a bottle of milk each day at his work and uses olive oil freely at home.

E. I. Myers of Welshpool was employed in the works for 11 years and found it necessary to leave his employment about 18 months ago on account of ill health. He stated that his health appeared to be suffering progressively with his continued employment. He described his symptoms as similar to those described by Wood. He did not consult a doctor since he began to feel an improvement immediately he left his work at the factory and his only disability now is a continual huskiness.

E. King of Goodwood Lodge, Rivervale, was employed in the mill for 5 years and left 3 years ago when he states his health completely broke down and this was attributed to the heavy work and the dust laden atmosphere; he described his symptoms as the same as those described by Wood and Myers. He was in hospital for a considerable period and was treated by Dr. Hayward. It is understood, however, that he suffers from a chronic heart trouble.

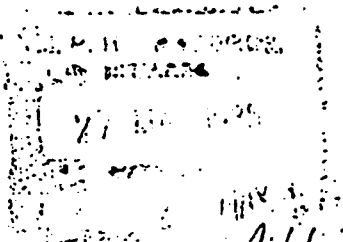
The two men mentioned by Inspector Mooney in his previous report were selected for the following reasons -

1. They were among the oldest employees and were continually engaged in very dusty processes; and
2. Wood appears to be ill and looks drawn and haggard and it was understood that Evans had to leave work on several occasions through illness.

Action has already been taken by this department to ensure the collection and disposal of dust as far as is practicable and an exhaust system of ventilation is now being installed at the factory.

I shall be glad to receive your further comments and advice.

AC Radshaw
CHIEF INSPECTOR OF FACTORIES.



GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

P. & S. 41. / 17

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DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR.

OFFICE OF CHIEF INSPECTOR OF FACTORIES,
56 JAMES STREET.

PERTH, W.A. 23rd July, 1935.

In replying please quote 178/35.

All remittances to be made payable
to the

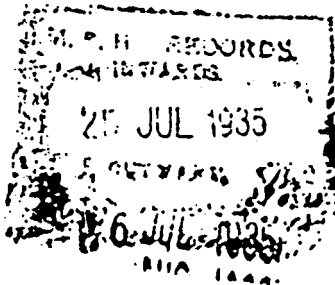
Chief Inspector of Factories.
ACB/S.

1. 27/172
THE COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC HEALTH.

Adverting to my memorandum to you dated the 24th May last, relative to the suggested medical examination of certain workmen employed in the Asbestos Works of Messrs. James Hardie & Co. Ltd., River-
vale, I shall be glad if you will, at your early convenience, let me have your comments and advice.

AC Radshaw

CHIEF INSPECTOR OF FACTORIES.



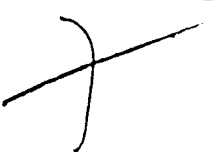
Noted S.A.
25/7

30th July, 1935

CHIEF INSPECTOR OF FACTORIES.

Regarding your suggested examination of certain men engaged at Hardie's Asbestos Works, I have to say that, after consideration, I have come to the conclusion that provided you have required all possible means of preventing a dust nuisance at these works, there is no object in this Department examining old employees who may have suffered from conditions previously existing. These men, and any future ones suffering from occupational trouble should, I think, choose their own Doctor under Industrial Disease Compensation conditions.

COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC HEALTH.



A.EMS.

15th May, 1935.

THE CHIEF INSPECTOR OF FACTORIES.

Regarding the question of examination of employees at Asbestos works, there are several points which require serious consideration.

Pneumoconiosis is under the Workers' Compensation Act, ground for compensation, and the condition arising from inhalation of Asbestos is really pneumoconiosis. The schedule however, describes any process of mining or quarrying or stone cutting or crushing as being an industry in which the disease is compensatable.

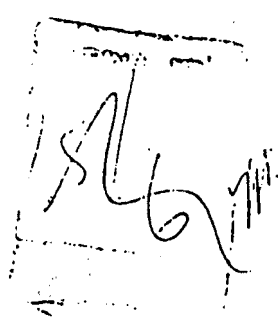
Does Asbestos work come under such a description ? If this disease is compensatable, then the patient is entitled to choose his own medical practitioner and claim compensation for any condition found. Is the Employer aware of this ?

If we examine these two cases, we must inform them of our findings.

Have they yet found it necessary to consult a doctor and upon what grounds does your Inspector pick out these two for examination ?

I think we should proceed cautiously in this case and discuss the matter perhaps with the employer before going further.

Meanwhile, you should take all possible action to render the process safe from the point of view of dust prevention.



COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC HEALTH.

GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

P. & S. 474.

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DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR.

OFFICE OF CHIEF INSPECTOR OF FACTORIES,
 56 JAMES STREET.

PERTH. W.A. 17th April, 1935.

In replying, please quote: 17/8/35

THE COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC HEALTH.

In a report on "Effects of Asbestos Dust on the Lungs, and Dust Suppression in the Asbestos Industry", by Dr. E.R.A. Merewether, M.D., H.M. Medical Inspector of Factories, England, and C.W. Price, Engineering Inspector of Factories, published in London in 1930, the following statement appears at page 9:-

"Examination of the data collected in this investigation leads to the conclusion that the inhalation of asbestos dust over a period of years results in the development of a serious type of fibrosis of the lungs".

In a table indicating the incidence of Fibrosis relative to length of employment, it is shown that examination of 363 persons employed in the industry for varying periods up to 20 years and over, 95, or 26.2%, had developed fibrosis of the lungs. Of those who had been employed for periods ranging from -

5 to 9 years	-	25.5%	were	afflicted
10 to 14 "	-	32.1%	"	"
15 to 19 "	-	53.6%	"	"
and 20 years & over	-	60.9%	"	"

So far as I am aware we have only one factory in this State, that of James Hardie & Co. Ltd., River-
 vale, in which any of the processes which were subject to the investigations are carried on. In this factory 62 men are employed and comparatively only a few have been employed for a lengthy period in what might be regarded as the dangerous processes.

I attach hereto for your information a copy of a report recently submitted by Mr. Inspector Mooney of this Department on the factory referred to and from which it will be noted that two employees, viz. C. M. Wood of South Perth, who has been employed for 6 years, and G. Evans of Bayswater, employed for 10 years, appear to the Inspector to be suffering in a marked degree from the effects of asbestos dust.

There is no provision in the Factories Shops Act under which persons employed in unhealthy industries can be required to submit to medical examination. It is thought, however, that the two workers referred to would, if requested, be willing to undergo such an examination if it could be arranged. I shall be glad if you will advise whether, in the interests of the men concerned and of the workers in the industry generally, you would arrange for the two men referred to to be medically examined if they are agreeable.

It may be possible in the circumstances to warrant it, to arrange for these workers to be transferred to some less dangerous of the processes carried on in the factory. This Department is already taking action to secure the installation in the factory of effective means for the collection and

disposal of dust generated in the factory.

Al Radshaw
CHIEF INSPECTOR OF FACTORIES.

E. H. H.

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G. H. H.

THE FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT, 1920.THE CHIEF INSPECTOR.

I have to report an inspection made on 7.3.1935 of the undermentioned factory premises.

Occupier: ~~William Handley & Co. Ltd.~~

Address: ~~10, Riverside~~

Business: ~~Manufacture of asbestos sheets and pipes.~~

Employed: - 68 m. 1 f. of whom the following are in actual contact with asbestos -

62 m. - 1/15, 4/16, 2/17, 2/18, 4/19, 1/20.

The manufacturing process.

For the purposes of this investigation the factory may be conveniently divided into four departments as follows -

1. Blending and grinding of raw asbestos.
2. Weighing and mixing with cement.
3. Rolling and pressing into sheets.
4. Cutting to size, moulding and trimming.

In the first department the raw asbestos is emptied by hand from bags into large grinding pan and reduced to the smallest possible particles.

It is then shovelled out and rubbed through a sieve, from which it is blown by a strong fan to three settling rooms in the next building.

From the settling rooms the asbestos is hand packed into bags, weighed and emptied into the tide mill, together with the correct proportion of cement (about 150 lbs. of asbestos to 9 bags of cement). Here the two are mixed with water and the resulting compound oozes into the rolling machine, where it is pressed into sheets. At this stage the material, which is now 1/7th asbestos, is really wet and any moulding that is necessary, such as corrugations, is now completed. When dry, or nearly so, the articles are trimmed and rubbed to the necessary shape and are ready for delivery.

Having regard to "The Report on the Effects of Asbestos Dust on the Lungs" by Dr. Kerewether and Mr. C. W. Price, and to the nature of the industry as conducted in this factory, it would appear that the following facts are pertinent:

1. The disease, Asbestosis, in its main clinical features resembles silicosis and as such is very definitely dangerous.

2. Most of the manufacturing processes to which the report refers do not exist in this factory.
3. That in those that do exist, i.e. crushing, opening, mixing, sawing, there is present in the adjacent atmosphere asbestos particles in quantity apparent to the naked eye.
4. That on page 7, para. 1. of the "Report on Conference

Between Employers & Inspectors of Methods for the Suppression of Asbestos Dust" (England) it is suggested as a criterion, that where there is visible long fibre, there is of necessity, much finer dust, and that methods for its suppression should be considered at this stage.

5. Table 3 of the medical report shows that the incidence of the disease increases with the length of employment and that from 5-9 years the group incidence is as high as 25.5%.

The number of employees and their length of employment as apportioned among the various departments in this factory are as follows -

1. Blending and grinding - 2 m. 1/17. 1 m. employed 10 years.
2. Weighing and mixing 4 m. - 1 m. employed 10 years. 3 m. from 3 - 6 months.
3. Rolling and pressing into sheets) 45 m. All wet methods used in these processes. No employee engaged for any length of time.
4. Cutting to size, moulding etc.)
5. Sawing corrugated sheets - 1 m. Employed 6 years.
6. Other Departments - Labourers, etc. - 10 m.

The Company has been in existence as manufacturers for 14 years and very few of the employees have any great length of service. The great majority are employed either outside the factory altogether (labourers etc.) or in the wet processes, where the danger is practically nil. See table 5 of the main report.

Those persons who have been more than 5 years employed in the industry are as follows -

1. Mr. W. Collier - Foreman, 14 years. His work does not necessitate any but the briefest contact with the dusty processes.
2. Mr. C. W. Wood - 20 Banksia Terrace, South Perth. 10 years. Employed for 6 years in the blending and grinding mill. This man has been attending Dr. Wilson of South Perth and appears to be suffering from the effects of asbestos dust.
3. G. Evans, 36 Woolley St., Bayswater - 10 years, employed in the weighing and mixing department. This man is employed in a very dusty process and at times has found it necessary to leave his employment through illness, which is attributed to the effects of dust.
4. J. Morrissey - 6 years. Employed spasmodically in the cutting and sawing department and apparently suffering no ill effects.

Summarised the investigation reveals -

1. That in the following processes, dust is generated in sufficient quantities to be easily visible in the atmosphere -

1. Blending and grinding.
2. Weighing and mixing.
3. Sawing of corrugated sheets.

2. That, guided by the medical report, this quantity appears to be definitely dangerous to the health of the workers employed.

~~2. That two employees, C.W. Wood and G. Evans, appear to be suffering in a marked degree from the effects of asbestos dust.~~

Recommendations.

1. ~~That early action be taken with regard to the introduction of methods for the suppression of dust in the processes as indicated.~~

2. That the two employees indicated be requested to submit themselves to medical examination.

(Sgd) R. Mooney.

8.3.1935.

INSPECTOR.