

Book Reviews

Present Status of Silicosis in Italy. By Enrico C. Vigliani. Pp. 145, with 4 illustrations. Fratelli Pagano, Genoa, 1950.

This bulletin is taken from the papers presented at the Fifteenth National Congress of Industrial Medicine sponsored by the Italian Society of Industrial Medicine in Genoa, Sept. 22 to 25, 1949.

It gives the results of over 200,000 radiologic examinations of industrial workers made by mobile x-ray units during the years from 1941 to 1948. Numerous tables are presented showing the frequency and distribution of silicosis, asbestosis and tuberculosis in various dusty trades. Data on geographical distribution of silicosis and tuberculosis in Italy are given.

The author objects to regulations which stipulate that the silicotic be given a copy of the clinical record, on the grounds that this information often frightens the worker. A preferable method is a personal conference in which the employee is (1) informed of his condition in a frank but tactful manner, (2) offered advice on what he can do to help himself and (3) given guidance in making a decision regarding change in occupation.

The three main purposes of a physical examination of workers in dusty trades are stated to be (1) to acquaint the industry with the magnitude of its health problems so that adequate control measures can be taken, (2) to eradicate tuberculosis and (3) to help make decisions regarding change of employment. Changing jobs is justified only when tuberculosis exists and silicosis is in danger of developing rapidly. In other cases major emphasis should be put on measures for controlling the dust.

Regulations and policies in effect in several countries regarding change of occupation for silicotics are cited.

In his conclusion Vigliani states that in Italy more than 100,000 workers are exposed to the hazard of silicosis. Two thousand of these have silicosis and 4,000 have signs of incipient silicosis. To these numbers must be added the hundreds whose cases have been missed and 600 who have died for whom compensation has already been made. He terms their condition a disgrace to society, especially since it is resulting in the decimation of large groups of relatively young workers.

Following the pattern of silicosis research centers in the United States, England, Belgium, Germany and Switzerland, Italy has established the Industrial Clinic of Milan where a large staff of scientists who are outstanding in the fields of medical science and engineering has recently been assembled. Provisions exist for the housing, study and treatment of silicotic patients. Close collaboration with universities, hospitals, industry and other research centers in Italy and abroad is projected.

Following the paper are discussions in which 12 leading Italian professional workers in the field of silicosis participate.

There is appended a bibliography of 449 abstracts of Italian publications on silicosis and other pneumoconioses, listed alphabetically by author and chronologically from 1871 to 1949.

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