

1. Numbers of mesotheliomas

Page 12, written evidence Turners said they had 30 mesotheliomas. A document obtained from an ex-company employee shows there were 35 mesotheliomas known to the company on 27/8/1976, one of these was 'suspected', and three worked finally at the Hindley Green annex of the Rochdale factory but their significant exposure had occurred at Rochdale. The company's statement to the Government Committee does not appear to have been accurate. 4.

2. Low dose mesothelioma

Page 59 written evidence says that none of the company's mesotheliomas could be described as low dose. The same document, referred to above, shows that the company was aware of a number of low dose cases including exposures of one year, five months, three years, 10 days. 4.

Emma Marshall whose exposure was given as 'nil' (a reference presumably to work in scheduled areas) and Margaret Chrimes, whose exposure was given as '3 years', were both office workers who nevertheless passed through the factory in the course of their work. 5. 6.

3. Mesothelioma and white asbestos

Turners now say they have had 49 cases of mesothelioma since the mid-1970's and 40 of those were connected with the exposure of blue asbestos (Rochdale Observer Saturday 31 July 1982), an admission that the company no longer attributes all its cases to blue. In their oral evidence to the ACA in 1977 Turners were firmly of the opinion that "where we know the asbestos exposure, it included blue". This was a reference to all their mesothelioma cases, that they accepted, were caused by asbestos. 7.

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Tabbies

4. The weaving shed

The central plank of Turners evidence rested on their experience in the weaving shed.

Page 3 of their written evidence states, "We draw particular attention to the statistics relating to the weaving department at TBA". 8.

This is an area where the 2 f/ml standard had operated for 25 years, "Yet among those exposed for the first time since 1951 there has been no case of any asbestos-related disease whatever". (Turner and Newall oral evidence submitted by Mr J K Shepherd, Managing Director, June 1977). Yet Dr Morris knew by early 1978 that some weavers had asbestos-related lung abnormalities and, in fact, a weaver was certified in 1977 - a fact which is now admitted by the company in correspondence with the GMU. Also in 1978 two suspected asbestosis cases were moved from the weaving shed. 9.

5. Lung cancer

Turners said on page 11 of their written submission, "the two-fold excess of lung cancers is the result of 6 cases in a group very heavily exposed indeed in the early '50's or between 1925 and 1930, all cigarette smokers. 10.

Details of the six cases were printed on page 49, Table 8, which was never published in the digest of evidence. The digest refers the reader to "Tables 1 to 10 attached" but they are not attached. Table 8 shows the six men, three of these Francis Wilkinson, Peter J Moore and George Armstrong - all had asbestosis as well

as lung cancer. Attention should perhaps have also been drawn to this. 11.

6. Fixing a "safe" level

Turners said (page 11 written submission), "Where information is factually available on dust concentrations, adverse health effects have always been associated with average dust levels well above 2 f/ml" (100 f/years/ml) 10.

In their oral evidence the company argued that amongst a group of workers exposed over 10 years since 1951, "asbestosis does not appear until we reach a cumulative mean exposure of 170 years/ml". But Table 7 on page 48 of their written evidence (which was also omitted from publication in the Digest of Evidence), shows that three workers contracted asbestosis at a cumulative dose of less than 100 f years and altogether five contracted asbestosis under 170 f/years. 7. 12.

In their evidence Turners commented that - "in layman's terms," our evidence "represents a less stringent standard than 2 f/ml". This was not true. 170 f/ml was the mean figure at which workers got asbestosis. As we have said, five workers out of the 10 in the cohort got asbestosis at less than 170 f/ml.

7. BOHS

The BOHS asbestos sub-committee's final report which was completed on September 4th 1980, is enclosed. It has not been published. 13.

On 27th April 1978 Mr A Carstairs of the HSE was sent an interim report from the BOHS. Mr Stan Roach for the BOHS stated that he

hoped the Medical Working Group of the ACA "is able to appreciate that substantial new evidence is being produced."

The Advisory Committee on Asbestos took a different view. On page 55 of the ACA's final report the Committee stated "these studies are unlikely to alter previous findings substantially".

But commenting on the BOHS report Mr Julian Peto has expressed the view privately that the BOHS report shows clearly that the 2 f/ml standard is substantially wide of the mark. At 2 f/ml over a working life there will be 17% - 20% of workers showing at least one symptom. Mr Peto expresses the private view that this proves that the 2 f/ml standard was wildly wrong and should be made public. 14.

8. Dr Morris' Study

Dr Morris' complete study contained various useful pieces of information. The full data was not submitted to the ACA although we understand that Dr Greenberg has now seen the full data and that he and Dr Sorrie are negotiating with Dr Morris for further access to this material. This is obviously a matter for discussion between the HSE and Dr Morris.

The significance of Dr Morris' study that the prevalence of asbestos induced lung damage at Rochdale appears to be much higher than the impression conveyed by the company in its evidence to the Committee. One in four workers out of a cohort of approximately 300 workers who began after 1950 had contracted what Dr Morris describes as definite or strongly suspected asbestosis, based on two or more adverse effects. One fifth of these workers showed their first signs after less than 100 f/years ml.

In the initial summary of Dr Morris' work, the cohort was coded so that the 'place of work' within the factory of each worker could not be identified. This would have disguised the significant fact, in our submission, that some affected workers were in the weaving shed. 7.

9. Fortex

Turners told the ACA "and in our factory making Fortex products we have no problems whatever in meeting the 2 f/ml standard - and we are usually well below it".

One of the company's admissions since the programme is that in November 1979 Fortex dust had peaked on the odd occasion on the spinning frames as high as 6 f/ml.

But masks were not introduced until May 1980 says Turners, which would indicate that for six months workers were occasionally exposed to excessive dust levels.

In October 1981 there was a Fortex dust peak of 11 f/ml."

The problem is still unresolved. It is pertinent to note that in animal experiments at the Institute of Occupational Medicine at Edinburgh Fortex has produced mesotheliomas. 9.

Turners U.K. subsidiaries

10. We note there was little or no evidence of the extent of asbestos related disease at Newalls Insulation and J.W. Roberts. So much so that the ACA was only able to conclude the numbers of victims at Newalls Insulation (see Appendix 2 final Report).

Third World

11. Turners neglected to give information on the risk of disease in their chrysotile mining operations, especially in Swaziland and Zimbabwe, which may have been germane to an assessment of the risks of exposure to chrysotile. (See Observer 15.8.82), 15.

ETERNIT1. Waste Disposal

The company told the ACA "waste is disposed of by dumping in a pit- and then covering the material thus dumped with earth." (P77, published Digest of evidence).

This procedure does not appear to have occurred consistently in practice. The pit or dump was uncovered on a number of occasions when we visited it. Photographs (enclosed) show this to be so, in breach of the Code of Practice for dumping.

2. Morbidity and mortality

The company stated to the ACA, "Within the catchment area of the Meldreth factory, including its employees, there has, since the commencement of asbestos cement production in 1929 and up to the date of drafting this submission, been one known case of asbestos related disease" (P77 Digest of evidence).

In fact a rather different picture emerged as a result of our enquiries. We found 16-20

Daniel Archer - asbestosis

Bert Adams - mesothelioma

Arthur Ward - mesothelioma

Lilian de Bonnair - mesothelioma

June Rule - mesothelioma

Gleno Ltd

1. Gleno Asbestos supported and endorsed the submission to the ACA (see page 2, Selected written Evidence), made by the Asbestos Cement Manufacturers Association.

In paragraph 28 (XV) they submit that "Factory waste, including fibre, is dealt with in a regulated manner on controlled tips under a Code of Practice".

But at Glenos we found their waste was left in a mound for some long time before being shovelled by a tractor into an open topped lorry and being transported uncovered through residential areas to an authorised tip. We have enclosed photographs for your attention.

2. The mound of waste is in a yard close to private housing and residents have complained of the dust which is blown into their homes (see press cuttings).

These criticisms of the industry underline the need for policing of the Asbestos Regulations and the Code of Practice for the disposal of asbestos.