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11th June, 1976

CONFIDENTIAL

T & N MEDICAL ADVISER'S REPORT FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY - JUNE 1976

A. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH MATTERS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

1. Home Companies Visited

1.1 TAC Construction Materials Limited

I have had the opportunity of visiting TAC Trafford Park on two occasions during the past 6 months to accompany Dr. Malcolm and overseas visitors on factory tours. This Company is obviously very conscious of the importance of maintaining efficient dust control standards and has excellent Housekeeping standards as a result. The EMAS Survey of Asbestos Workers is proceeding and the present arrangements for medical and radiological surveillance of asbestos workers at all TAC factories are adequate.

1.2 BIP, Streetley

I visited BIP Streetly to inspect the Pilon plant and to re-assure Mr. Brindley, that there was not likely to be a respiratory hazard associated with the handling and processing of continuous filament glass fibre.

2. MEDICAL ARRANGEMENTS IN UNIT COMPANIES

The arrangements at all Home Companies appear to be adequate although it is obvious that the nature of the service provided is essentially that of pre-employment medical screening and first aid administration to injured workers. It is difficult to assess to what extent the part-time medical officers (most of whom are very busy GP's, or work for other companies as well) are able to provide an advisory service or perform regular plant inspections. Until such time as the Group centralises the control of medical services under a Group Chief Medical Officer assisted by properly trained and qualified full-time industrial medical officers and nurses, it will not be possible to produce a report on medical arrangements indicating precisely the role of such arrangements in maintaining a healthy and safe working environment.

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3. GROUP SURVEY OF TOXIC MATERIALS

This matter is now in the hands of the Group Environmental Control Co-ordinator with whom I have collaborated in the compilation of a list of chemicals used in the various unit companies. It is hoped to produce the promised index of toxic substances by the end of the 1976 summer.

There is a growing public awareness of health risks in industry and risks to the community at large as a result of industrial processes in their midst.

The Control of Pollution Act, when it is eventually implemented, will give Local Authorities wider powers than they presently possess to control noxious or unpleasant industrial pollutants.

There is a growing awareness that besides radiation risks other agents used in industry may produce genetic defects in unborn children by either acting on the reproductive system of the husband or wife at any time before pregnancy, or by acting on the fertilised egg in the pregnant woman during the early stages of pregnancy. It has only just been realised that the genetic defect may be dose dependent, lower dosages leading to survival of deformed or mentally retarded or defective children, higher dosages leading to abortions or still birth of deformed foetuses. Furthermore, there are long-term effects which can affect subsequent generations.

The list of carcinogenic agents now known to cause cancer in animals is rapidly getting longer and many of these substances or their derivatives are finding their way into industry.

The Sex Discrimmination Act, The Equal Pay Act and the Employment Protection Act all open up the possibility that women will apply for, and perhaps perform, jobs previously done only by men, thus exposing them to carcinogenic, teratogenic or mutagenic substances which they have not previously encountered in industry. I strongly advise unit companies to review their chemicals handled by women and to take their potential effects into careful consideration when engaging women to work with these materials. A Bill at present before Parliament, the Congenital Disabilities (Civil Liabilities) Bill, is designed to allow a child which is

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born deformed as a result of anything related to either parent, and due to the actions of a person liable in tort to either parent, to claim against that person. If the damage is purely to the foetus, the child can bring such an action if it survives for 48 hours after birth. Circumstances involving previous breach of statutory duty might be more easily brought by the relevant parent than by the child. The encouragement, given by the Employment Protection Act, to pregnant women to tell their employer at a far earlier stage, could result (if the Bill is enacted) in claims against employers for foetal damage; those who give advice must therefore exercise even greater caution.

I drew ~~three~~ matters to the attention of the Group Environmental Co-ordination Meeting held at TAC C.M. Trafford Park on Wednesday, 29th April, 1976.

4. STUDY OF MEDICAL, ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING, PRODUCTION AND PERSONNEL RECORDS

The T & N study appears to have ended inconclusively. No report has been issued from the office of the Group Personnel Services regarding the outcome of the survey of Unit Company records and I have similarly had no further contact with T & N Management Services. At TBA, however, the Personnel Department, Management Services, Health & Safety Organisation and Medical Departments, have devised a scheme for linking environmental records of personal asbestos samples with the personnel and medical records. The Company payroll forms the basis for the scheme and provides the names of individuals to be sampled. The records are computerised and will be available for rapid retrieval and analysis in relation to epidemiological studies. This could greatly simplify the analysis of data for use in deriving Hygiene Standards whilst vastly increasing the size of the available data-store. When this ambitious scheme has become fully operational it will serve as a model to the rest of the Companies in the Group. The Group Environmental Control Co-ordinator has been party to some of the TBA discussions and Mr. N. Rhodes outlined the TBA Scheme to the recent Environmental Co-ordination Meeting.

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5. ASBESTOS & HEALTH

The Press and media tirade against asbestos continues and in the light of some of the less responsible statements which have been made the public reaction has been understandably vociferous. Many people go in fear of coming in contact with asbestos and the mass hysteria in towns like Hebden Bridge is distressing to all concerned. It is to be hoped that the Commission of Enquiry set up by Mr. Michael Foot will delve into all aspects of the uses of asbestos and their hazards and result in the presentation of an unbiased report based upon the outcome of public hearings and scientific enquiries by selected working groups.

The BOHS Asbestos Standards Sub-Committee continues to study the information it has available in order to review the criteria for the present standard of 100 fibre years/cc (or 2 fibres/cc as it has become known!). To date it would appear that the only worthwhile data relating exposure histories to morbidity is available at TBA. I have built steadily upon the store of information which John Knox began and I have added to it by enlarging the scope of the surveillance programme of asbestos workers. It is rewarding to know that this is now bearing fruit. When John Knox presented his data to the BOHS Sub-Committee in 1966 he was not able to satisfy himself or the Committee that anything other than basal crepitations (rales) could be regarded as the earliest effects of asbestos exposure. X-rays available to him were not of very high quality and he did not have the benefit of X-ray classifications and reading techniques available today. The tendency today is to regard X-ray changes as the earliest detectable changes and this shifts the dose-response curve to the left. It seems to me most likely, in view of the present state of the analysis of the TBA data, that the BOHS Sub-Committee will revise its Standard and recommend a stricter limit. At a guess I believe the Committee is going to have to consider a standard of 50 fibre years/cc (or 1 fibre/cc for 50 years) to provide for a 1% risk of developing the earliest response to asbestos exposure. As to whether this standard (or any other for that matter) based on currently available data will also provide for the safe use of asbestos as an industrial carcinogen, cannot be determined with any more certainty. This matter can only be resolved by studies such as the EMAS National Survey of Asbestos Workers and by

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8. NOISE

8.1 Engineering Components Ltd., Slough

This Company has made an admirable effort to cope with its noise problems. Not having any experts on the staff, two or three engineers (including a graduate) were sent on a course to learn how to make environmental measurements and to learn about noise control techniques. Much work has since been done in an attempt to isolate noise sources and eliminate or reduce them. This work has been commended by the Factory Inspectorate who have asked to be kept informed of progress in the work of reducing the noise levels on power presses.

8.2 TBA Industrial Products Ltd.

A noise slide/tape presentation has been produced and will shortly be shown to employees in noise areas. A Noise Sub-Committee of the Health and Safety Committee has been instrumental in developing policies for implementation as a hearing conservation programme. All noise areas have been designated and sign-posted, hearing protection is provided and new employees are screened by means of audiometry and base-line hearing levels established.

8.3 Annual Meeting of T & N Medical Officers

The Annual Meeting of T & N Medical Officers was held on 14th and 15th May, 1976 at Slough. The subject discussed on this occasion was "Noise in Industry". Dr. Holmes, Mr. Lincoln, Mr. C.A. Bate and I spoke on the subject and the TBA slide/tape was shown. A separate report on this meeting is in preparation.

B. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH MATTERS OVERSEAS

1. CANADA

I visited Canada in January 1976 and at the request of Mr. Peter Steen, President of Cassiar Asbestos Corporation Ltd., I addressed meetings in Vancouver, Cassiar and Whitehorse. The meetings were attended by business men, trade unionists, customers, Provincial and Territorial Government officials and members of parliament as well as scientists employed by the various companies having an interest in asbestos and health and

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by the Government Agencies concerned. I was invited to talk to the members of the Workers Compensation Board and had the opportunity also of scrutinising X-rays sent to the Board from the mines. I was able to make suggestions as to how the quality of the medical surveillance of miners and millers could be improved.

My visit to British Columbia included a trip to Cassiar where I spoke to the union representatives and management representatives. I also addressed a meeting of the townspeople of Cassiar - only five attended besides the two Company Doctors, the Mine Manager and other officials.

I visited Atlas Asbestos Co. Ltd. in Montreal where I had useful discussions with Mr. Barge, Mr. Todd and Dr. Asselin, the newly appointed Company Medical Officer. I also went to see Dr. F. Gregoire, Chairman of the Pneumoconiosis Medical Board, and discussed a number of problem cases with him. Dr. Asselin has subsequently visited the U.K.

2. USA

I returned via the United States having been invited by Mr. John Marsh to attend a meeting of their Company Medical Directors and Environmental Health experts at the Corporate Headquarters of Raybestos-Manhattan in Trumbull, Connecticut.

3. SOUTH AFRICA

At the request of Mr. J.K. Shepherd I visited TAP in Jacobs, Natal, in March. The purpose of the visit was to review the situation regarding asbestosis cases discovered by a recent case finding exercise conducted by Dr. King, the Company Medical Officer. It had been suggested that the National Research Institute for Occupational Diseases of the South African Medical Research Council should collaborate in environmental monitoring and epidemiological studies with Dr. King. I discussed these suggestions with Professor Webster, Director of the NRIOD and Professor Coetzee, Medical Adviser to the South African Asbestos Industry. A full report on the outcome of my investigations and discussions has been forwarded to Mr. J.K. Shepherd. I was able to make a number of recommendations designed to assist TAP.

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and Ferodo to improve their industrial hygiene and their medical surveillance programmes. Dr. King has visited the United Kingdom and was able to see TBA's Rochdale factory and TAC's Trafford Park factory. He was also able to review X-rays and medical data with me and Dr. Malcolm.

I spent a day at the NRIOD as the guest of Professor Webster and saw at first hand the research work being carried out.

4. SWAZILAND

Following my visit to the NRIOD I went to Havelock Mines. This was my first visit. I was not entirely satisfied with my findings and have sent a full report to Mr. H.S.D. Hardie. I believe that the community living in the vicinity of the mine and mills should be more adequately protected from environmental pollution. This can only be achieved by greater effort and expenditure on dust control in the mills.

I also was not satisfied with the level of medical surveillance of asbestos workers practised in Havelock and suggested ways in which this could be improved.

C. GENERAL REMARKS

This is probably the last six monthly report which I will be responsible for writing as I have handed in my resignation in order to join Raybestos-Manhattan as Corporate Medical Director. It is with regret that I have decided to take this step as I have always wanted to complete the work I have begun at TBA and in its wider aspects, in the T & N Group. I know that there are many dedicated people, often not recognised for their true worth, working enthusiastically to improve the health and safety of all employees. I hope that I have afforded them encouragement and given them adequate advice during my tenure of office. The links which I have forged with T & N, with Government Agencies and with my colleagues in the practice of Occupational Health will not only stand me in good stead in the future, but, more important still, will continue to be of immeasurable benefit to the Group long after I have left these shores for the U.S.A.

H.C. Lewinsohn.