CONFIDENTIAL

Asbestos, Quebec.
February 6, 1940.

Mr. H. K. Sherry, V-P.

ASBESTOSIS
Research Work at Saranac Laboratory

I have carefully reviewed the 'Interim Report on Experimental Asbestosis at the Saranac Laboratory'. It is a very revealing document and if the experiments are continued we should try to get a copy of the final report.

I would like to make the following comments. I think the report indicates that there is a definite hazard to exposure to asbestos dust, however, it is much less in the case of fine dust and that the hazards are very much less than commonly supposed.

1. Contrary to previous literature on the subject of asbestosis, the experiment seems to prove the innocuousness of very fine asbestos dust especially 2 microns and less. Mr. Binder's report showed we have a heavy concentration of fine dust in our mills of 10 microns and less.

2. The second experiment definitely showed that fibrosis developed in the lungs of Guinea pigs, white mice and cats with just one year's exposure. The dust concentration was 37.5 million particles per cubic foot of fairly long fibres.

3. As opposed to No. 2 above the report indicates that in general the hazards of asbestos dust are not as great as commonly supposed.

   (a) The first experiment with the fine dust produced 'barely enough change — to be visible on magnification of 2 or 3 diameters.'

   (b) The irritation from asbestos is not chemical but mechanical in nature. I noted this conclusion in several other reports on asbestosis.

   (c) Even the effects of mechanical irritation are lessened due to the smooth covering deposited upon the surface of asbestos fibre that forms the asbestosis body.

   (d) Asbestosis does not progress after cessation of exposure. This is an important observation though I do not see that he proves it conclusively. Our policy to place mill men in outside jobs when possible when their lungs appear to show symptoms of fibrosis.

   (e) If there is species susceptibility may there not be individual human susceptibility as our physical examinations here would indicate?

Published by AsbestosClaims.Law
asbestosclaims.law/library/11177/1

As regards contacts with W.B.S.Robertson, Workmen's Compensation Commission, etc., I think it advisable to discuss the report at the next C.I.P.A. meeting in a confidential manner and give it no further publicity whatsoever.

The conclusions drawn are not yet sufficiently positive to be made the basis of very definite statements on the subject of asbestosis. It is an 'interim' report and I think we should await the final report before doing anything about it.

Mr. Binder mentioned to me when up here recently that Mr. Syme planned a conference of Company doctors with asbestosis a major subject of discussion. No doubt our Industrial Relations Department would be interested in receiving a copy of Mr. Gardner's report.

C. M. McGaw.
Industrial Relations Dept.

CMD
cc-Dr. H. E. Stevenson