Manville Factory
Oct. 6, 1942

Personal & Confidential

Mr. A.R.Fisher, V.P.
General Headquarters

REASONS FOR EMPLOYEES LEAVING J-M

I had quite a nice visit this morning with Mr. Slifer, who is working with Mr. Kent at Diehl on the employment problem. He is cooperating with us 100% in trying not to employ people who leave us for work with them, unless they are released with our approval. He knows of three people they have recently employed at Diehl who have spent as much as 18 years with us. I am acquainted with the three cases, and there is nothing we can do at Manville to hold these people in our service.

Mr. Slifer said he did not know whether the statements given him by our former employees were correct or not, but the four reasons most often given are as follows: they want to leave Johns-Manville because:—

(1) We have less attractive working conditions. He said the complaint he hears most often is that people are afraid to work in the dust of some of our departments. They mentioned particularly the black dust that flies around the departments. This could be graphite in the Packing Department, or more probably, the black slate dust from punching #607 Shingles, which I recently called to your attention. We just have not been able to hold men on that job.

(2) The second reason they gave is that they are unable to get transfers from their present jobs to better ones in the factory. I know this is true. Practically every employee in departments working 5 days a week, such as Roofing, A-1, and H Building is looking for transfer to B Building, where 6 and 7 days are available, or to Magnesia, where they are always on 6 days. (Incidentally, a number of our former moulders in the Magnesia Department have applied at Diehl, and complain about the hot, wet condition in the Moulding Room.) It has been our practice at Manville not to permit wholesale transfer from one department to another, but to grant transfers to older employees when vacancies occur in the more attractive jobs. I do not know how to solve this complaint, except to shut down the less essential sections of the plant and let everyone work directly on important war projects.

(3) The third complaint is that there is no opportunity at Manville for promotion. This statement is a fiction of their own minds. Under the Job Evaluation set-up, employees know the job rates, and the older ones are given a chance to advance to the better-paying jobs. There undoubtedly are a number of our employees who would like to have an opportunity for jobs which they can not fill, but I do not think this exists to a great extent.

(4) The fourth reason, again, is more imaginary than true, that is, that they can not get any rate increases at Manville. Job Evaluation has set up a very fine system of wage increases. It is thoroughly understood by the employees, and rate increases are given according to a definite plan. Promotions to better jobs are given in a progressive, up-grading system. I believe some of our employees are being promoted today who otherwise might have been overlooked. Dissatisfaction because of our rates, I believe, is the least cause for our failure to hold people. In my opinion, our working conditions and the type of our work


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are the more prominent causes. Mr. Slifer said that his people say that the work at Manville Rctory is heavy and hard, and that they are kept pretty constantly at their work to meet tight production standards.

Mr. Slifer promised to keep me posted on any further comments he hears on why our people leave us to seek work with them. We will have to see what we can do about convincing our employees that they have attractive jobs at Johns-Manville. Just recently, a few of the girls who left us to work at Diehl, have returned, and I am trying to find out from them just what their reasons are. The only one I can get to date is that they felt strange at Diehl, and although their working conditions were easier and their work lighter at Diehl, they preferred to return to work here among their old friends and familiar surroundings.

Some time ago, I talked to Luther Reed about getting out some publicity concerning the value and end use of the products we are making for war purposes, and I still think that a properly designed campaign put on by ourselves might be helpful in this direction. I will follow Luther again on this to see if we can get something specific under way.

JEB:MES

cc: Mr. J.F.Byrne, Ind. Rels., C.H.


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