December 19, 1944.

Mr. F. G. Lippert,
General Headquarters,
New York, N. Y.

South African Blue Fibre

In recent weeks we have had a shipment of 10,000 bags marked "Blue C & C" from [illegible], California. Because of certain properties of this fibre, the bags could not be classed properly and most of the fibre remained in the jute. [illegible] on the men in our bag-sorting department handled these bags, they were afflicted with almost constant attacks of bronchial asthma. The men have handled small lots of bags containing this fibre many times in the past with no apparent effect, but when this large shipment had to be handled all the men experienced great difficulty in breathing. I may mention that all these men have no asthmatic symptoms when handling bags of other kinds of fibre.

When this was brought to my attention we reduced the amount of fibre spread on sorting belt one inch to a few hours per week, and are supplying the men with respirators. As yet it is too soon to tell whether or not this will have any beneficial effect.

I am writing to inform you of this condition and to ask if you have heard of similar cases occurring in any of our other plants where the blue fibre is used. I would appreciate very much if you could give me this information and also make [illegible] any suggestions you would care to make.

Very truly yours,

/s/ K. S.

Kenneth S. Smith, M.D.

KS/r

Cc: W. H. Hoffmann
File

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