219

218

C O P Y

Charleston, S.C. May 6, 1

Mr. Julian Mitchell
Charleston, S. C.

Dear Mr. Mitchell:

I am very glad indeed to have the opportunity of examining Dr. Gardner's report on recent investigations of the effect of fine asbestos dust as compared with longer fiber dust. As he says, if the hypothesis constructed on the basis of this experimentation proves tenable, our previous idea that the finer the dust the more harmful will have to be revamped.

It also goes to show that the only thing that can yet be positively stated is that in the human sufficient exposure to asbestos dust will cause asbestosis, but what constitutes sufficient exposure still remains subject to lack of complete knowledge.

It might be well as a forward-looking program for the asbestos factory to begin to think more about precautionary measures in departments where the dust is coarser, although even apparently less in amount.

As Dr. Gardner says, there are things about asbestosis which have not been satisfactorily explained as yet. One that remains with me and my local material is, why the severest old cases show so much evidence of pure silicosis. I have not been able to get any evidence that any of the asbestos used here may have had free silica in it, but, unless asbestosis under some conditions shows the feature of silicosis, it must have had.

I think that this question, that is whether local cases have not been exposed to free silica in addition to silicates, is very important for the local industry to clear.

I do not think that Dr. Gardner's experiments have any practical bearing on whether there is such a thing as asbestosis. Mr. Jeffcott suggested to me that conclusion, out of the extract from Dr. A. J. Ireland in the South African Mining and Engineering Journal of Jan. 15, 1938. All I can conclude from this extract is that apparently under the conditions existing there, the exposure is insufficient. Whatever those conditions may be it might be well to ascertain, if possible.

Neither do I follow fully the suggestion in Mr. Vandiver Brown's letter of April 28, 1938, that Gardner's experiments would negative the claim that the fibrosis is of a progressive character. If the material is long enduring the fibrosis might keep up even though the influence is only mechanical.

I get stimulation from the South African report to again remind that no one can know what the hazard here is until the same sort of examination of workers is done here.

172.

I shall be glad to talk these matters over with you at any convenient time.

Sincerely yours

004726

CRMC-Motley1000-Subj-001307