

November 24, 1970

Mr. Gabriel Alexander, Esq.
21910 Greenfield Road
Oak Park, Michigan 48237

Dear Mr. Alexander:

In connection with Appeal Board Case No. 5351 which you heard on November 12, 1970, the Union, in an attempt to justify the actions of the grievant in its brief and by the testimony it presented, attempted to establish that the Eldon Avenue Axle Plant is an unsafe place in which to work. We categorically deny this allegation and submit the following facts for the Chairman's consideration.

- (a) One of the most reliable sources of comparative information concerning the frequency and severity of industrial accidents is "Accident Facts," published annually by the National Safety Council. The statistics that "Accident Facts" reports reflect the experience of companies that are members of the Council. The Bureau of Labor Statistics of the United States Department of Labor publishes similar figures, which it bases on the experience of all firms in each industry, including those that are members of the NSC. A comparison of the frequency and severity of industrial injuries as reported by the NSC and the BLS, respectively, shows that the rate for both categories among NSC members, of which Chrysler is one, is much lower than that for all companies, as reported by the BLS. Thus, the frequency rate in 1968 of injuries of employees in the automobile industry whose employers are members of the NSC was 1.6 per million man hours, while the corresponding figure as reported by the BLS was 5.4 (NSC, "Accident Facts," 1969 Edition).

As we have noted, the frequency rate of injuries among NSC members in the automobile industry in 1968 was 1.6 per million man hours of work. The frequency rate for all companies reporting to the NSC was 7.35. The frequency rate for Chrysler Corporation as a whole was 1.48, being .15 lower than the NSC figure for the industry and 3.92 less than the BLS rate. The rate for Chrysler's power train operations, consisting largely of machining and assembling heavy parts (engines, drive mechanisms, gears, rear axles, and differentials) (Eldon Avenue is in the "power train group) was 1.96 and the rate for Eldon Avenue was 1.72 being 46th in a list of 78 Chrysler plants.

Preliminary information of the NSC covering the frequency rate of industrial injuries in 1969 was 8.08 per million man hours for NSC members in all industries and 1.67 for the automobile industry. Chrysler's rate was 1.48, the rate for its power train group was 1.96, and the rate for the Eldon Avenue Axle Plant was 1.26.

In January, 1970, Chrysler's frequency rate was .61 and Eldon Avenue's was 1.68. In February, Chrysler's frequency rate was .82 and Eldon Avenue's was 0. In March, Chrysler's frequency rate was .81 and Eldon Avenue's was 0. In April, Chrysler's rate was 1.20 and Eldon Avenue's was 0. In May, Chrysler's rate was 1.38 and Eldon Avenue's was 1.43. The accident involving the death of Gary Thompson accounted for Eldon Avenue's entire frequency rate in May, 1970.

Thus, the five-month frequency rate for Chrysler to May 13, 1970, was 1.17 and for Eldon Avenue was .92.

The National Safety Council recognizes excellence in plants' safety records by issuing awards. On November 12, 1969, the Council awarded to the Eldon Avenue Axle Plant its National Award of Merit, due to the plant's working 2,172,761 man hours without a lost-time accident between June 12, 1969, and September 8, 1969. This record was broken when an employee who was operating a machine dropped a part on his hand.

Eldon Avenue now has received an award for the period from January 28, 1970, to April 30, 1970, during which it operated 2,048,898 man hours without a lost-time accident. The record was interrupted because a machine operator who got dust in his left eye on April 30 developed conjunctivitis in May, causing him to lose time. There was no lost-time accident at Eldon Avenue between April 30, 1970, and the death of Gary Thompson on May 26, 1970.

- (b) The severity of lost-time accidents per million man hours worked at the Eldon Avenue Plant, as well as the frequency rate, compares favorably with the severity rates for industry generally, the automobile industry and Chrysler Corporation.

In 1969, the severity rate per accident for all industry, according to NSC figures, was 640 days. The severity rate for the automobile industry was 256 days. The rate for Chrysler Corporation was 194 days. The rate for Eldon Avenue was 126 days. BLS has not published its figures on severity of accidents in 1969, but from 1963 to 1967, both included, the severity rate reported by BLS averaged nearly twice that of NSC, the latter being from 39 to 46 per cent lower than the NSC rates, and one may safely assume that the differentials were approximately the same in 1969.

- (c) Chrysler has in its corporate and plant organizations highly qualified persons whose sole concern is assuring safe and healthful practices, equipment and working conditions for all employees.

On the corporate level, Neil McCallum is the Safety Director. He is a graduate in mechanical engineering and has had 20 years' experience in safety work. He has been with Chrysler since 1959 and before that General Motors Corporation. He is thoroughly familiar with all phases of automobile manufacture and with the safety and health problems they present. Mr. McCallum has under him three Safety Specialists who have engaged in safety work for a variety of companies, particularly in metal-working industries. Between them, they have had about 55 years' experience in safety work. Their principal duty consists of inspecting individual plants, analyzing their records, both as to frequency and severity of disabilities, and assuring compliance with corporate standards.

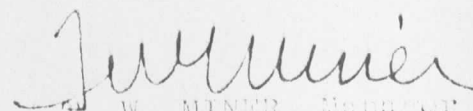
have, as an important part of their duties, discovering potentially hazardous conditions, both through their own observation and through reports of hourly-rate employees. Eldon Avenue has 15 Superintendents, 40 General Foremen, and 193 Foremen, whose duties include keeping their areas clean and safe. The plant has one Labor Relations Supervisor and four Labor Relations Representatives who spend much of their time in the plant discussing allegedly dangerous conditions with representatives of the Union.

- (f) The Eldon Avenue Axle Plant has a fully-equipped Medical Department. Its personnel includes a full-time physician on the first shift, two registered nurses on the first shift and one registered nurse on each of the second and third shifts. The department consists of an emergency room and six examination rooms. Its equipment includes an X-Ray machine, an ambulance containing a stretcher and first-aid materials, drugs, medications, beds and other paraphernalia for diagnosing and treating injuries and illnesses. Although the department's principal function is to treat injuries, it frequently treats, also, ailments that have no connection with the patient's work. When the doctor is not present, the nurses have full authority in their own discretion, to send employees to hospitals (usually Henry Ford Hospital) by ambulance, Company car or cab, but in any event at the Company's expense.

Plant Protection officers, fire marshals, and patrolmen, of whom there are 29 at Eldon Avenue, all have received first-aid training and, particularly, when and how to handle injured persons safely.

Clearly, the Eldon Avenue Axle Plant is not a dangerous place for work, and takes every reasonable means to protect the health and safety of its employees.

Very truly yours,



T. W. MINER, Manager
Automotive Manufacturing
Labor Relations

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cc: Mr. James Cichocki