with the press, it was difficult to rebut uninformed criticism as individual companies. Therefore, in December 1970, eight* companies in the asbestos industry formed the Asbestos Information Association/North America.**

The objectives of the AIA/NA are to:

1. Provide an authoritative channel of communication to all publics.
2. Publicly rebut irresponsible and uninformed criticism.
3. Propagate the benefits and indispensability of asbestos through advertising, publicity, speeches, etc.

While the Association has been in operation for less than a year, it has already established itself in many circles as spokesman for the asbestos manufacturing industry in North America. Some of the activities and accomplishments of the AIA/NA since its formation include:

1. A press briefing attended by approximately two dozen science writers and editors was held in New York on March 2 to acquaint the press with the facts about asbestos-health and about industry efforts in the health area. Many favorable stories appeared as a result of the briefing.
2. Background material, including balanced or favorable medical papers and AIA/NA position papers on various aspects of the asbestos-health problem, was sent to 300 editors and science writers across the country.
3. Spokesmen representing the Association testified at hearings on proposed bans of asbestos-containing spray insulations in New

* Cement Asbestos Products Co., Certain-teed Products Corp., Flintkote Co., GAF Corp., Johns-Manville Corp., National Gypsum Co., Panacon Corp., Raybestos-Manhattan, Inc.

** Atlas Asbestos Company joined the AIA/NA in July 1971

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13. Each month, AIA/NA member companies are sent a packet of recent medical papers and an evaluation of their content, newspaper and magazine clippings, and other items of interest relating to the health question.

14. Working relationships have been established with doctors, government officials at all levels, and others involved in asbestos-health research and regulation.

15. Close contact is maintained with other associations in the industry, such as the Asbestos Textile Institute, the Asbestos-Cement Products Association, the National Insulation Manufacturers Association, and also with the British Asbestos Information Committee and similar groups in France and the Benelux countries.

To assist in carrying out these activities, the AIA/NA retains the services of the Environmental Health Unit of Hill and Knowlton, Inc., the largest public relations agency in the world. H&K has been public relations counsel to Johns-Manville in the asbestos-health area for a number of years, and has done an outstanding job.

The AIA/NA is governed by a Board of Directors, elected by the member companies. The newly elected President of the AIA/NA is Albert H. Fay of National Gypsum. He succeeds Harold McNabb of Certain-teed.

Day-to-day activities are carried on by the Administrative Sub-Committee headed by the Secretary and including three others from member companies -- two experienced in public relations, the third in the area of environmental control/industrial hygiene. They consult with Officers of the AIA/NA, its legal counsel and other consultants as necessary.

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For 1971, the expenses of the AIA/NA are being underwritten by Johns-Manville. It is anticipated that funding for succeeding years will be shared by member companies.

For the program of the AIA/NA to be successful, the support of the entire industry is needed. Asbestos-health is not just an individual problem that each company can handle on its own. It has grown far beyond that. What is needed now is a concerted effort by all members of the asbestos mining, milling and manufacturing industry in North America to halt and reverse the dangerous trend of thinking in the United States and in Canada with regard to the supposed hazards of asbestos fiber. The banning of the use of asbestos in certain products and processes is already a reality, and this trend may continue and grow if the true facts are not presented in a bold and forceful manner.

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