General Headquarters, Box 911
September 24, 1954

J. C. Kelleher, A.F.D., Montreal

A copy of your letter of September 22, 1954, addressed to the Surprenant Mfg. Co., 172 Sterling Street, Clinton, Massachusetts, has been called to my attention.

Perhaps you are unaware of the fact that your letter constitutes a warranty to this company that asbestos fibre is a non-toxic material. If any employees of this company should suffer asbestos pneumoconiosis, in all probability they would have a good cause of action against us. I am sure you must be familiar with the fact that asbestos Grade 7R as used in floor tile would be a bad offender as far as causing asbestosis if the proper controls were not used and respirators were not donned by the employees handling the fibre.

It has been a policy of the Company that all inquiries from customers relative to any hazards that might be encountered in using Johns-Manville's materials should be referred to the Legal Department. The Legal Department acts as a clearing house for all of these inquiries and either answers the inquiries directly or refers them to Dr. Kenneth W. Smith or Hugh M. Jackson for specific technical information.

This matter has been discussed with C. V. Miller, Dr. Smith, and Hugh Jackson. We feel that both you and your salesmen should be acquainted with some of the problems inherent in the handling of asbestos fibre from the health and safety standpoint. The purpose of giving you and your men such information would be for the sole purpose of affording you a background so that you would be able to recognize a question which involved safety or health factors and without making any answer to it could refer it to this department.

I trust that you will not sell any asbestos fibre to this customer until such time as we have been able to remove from the record the apparent warranty of non-toxicity of asbestos fibre that you have given the Surprenant Mfg. Co.

On your next trip to New York, I hope that you will afford Dr. Smith, Hugh Jackson, and myself an opportunity to explain to you the proper method of handling inquiries of this nature.

Herbert Morton Ball

cc Dr. K. W. Smith
H. M. Jackson
C. V. Miller, Box 910 W.H.Reakes,Montreal

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