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INTER ORGANIZATION COMMUNICATION

Raybestos-Manhattan

DIVISION and LOCATION

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December 18, 1974

SUBJECT: International Conference of Asbestos Associations and Asbestos Information Bodies

November 27 and 28, 1974 - Paris

The 1974 meeting was the fourth International Meeting of industry representatives and scientific advisers concerned with the biological effects of asbestos. It was jointly organized by Chambre Syndicale de l'Amiante (Paris) and the Asbestos Information Committee (London). Cyril X. Latty (President of Beldam-Latty) and H. D. S. Hardie (Director, T & N), Presidents of the two organizations, were Co-Chairmen.

The first International Meeting of industry representatives was held in Caen, France in May, 1964. It is interesting that this meeting of industry representatives preceded the first International Meeting of scientists on the biological effects of asbestos at the New York Academy of Science in the Fall of 1964. The chairman of the latter meeting was Dr. I. J. Selikoff.

At the May, 1964 meeting the U.S. was represented by five professionals from the U.S. Public Health Service who called themselves the Coordinating Committee for Study of Occupational Health Problems in the Asbestos Products Manufacturing Industry. There were no representatives of U.S. industry present and, to my knowledge, the information presented at the meeting was never communicated to anyone in industry in the U.S.

The second International Industry Conference was held in London in November, 1971. The sole U.S. representative was Bill Raines of J-M, who at that time was serving as Executive Secretary of the newly formed Asbestos Information Association. A copy of the minutes of this meeting was given to me in Paris last March. To my knowledge no one in the U.S. industry, other than J-M, had previously been aware of the information communicated at the November 1971 meeting.

EXHIBIT P-713

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A third and very brief International Meeting of industry members was held in Lyon in 1972 in conjunction with the third working conference of scientists on the biological effects of asbestos. This industry meeting lasted only half-a-day and was devoted exclusively to developing defenses against anticipated attacks on the industry. At that time some of the industry representatives, particularly the French, were literally in a state of panic over the expected pronouncements of Selikoff and others. However, the Conference was conducted in a thoroughly professional manner and the anticipated attacks did not materialize. The U.S. was represented at this meeting and at the scientific meeting by Messrs. Solon, Swetonic and Marsh.

The International Conference of 1974 was preceded by informal talks in London and Paris on November 25 and November 27. The formal Conference took place on November 28 and 29 and was followed by a meeting of an ad hoc committee (established by the Conference) and informal conferences with the French on Saturday, November 30.

Fourteen nations were represented (see attached list of participants). The largest delegations were from the U.K. and France (ten each) followed by Germany with nine and Spain with five. The French had the largest number of Medical/Scientific delegates (five), followed by Germany with three, the U.K. with two and Belgium and Italy with one each. It is unfortunate that U.S. industry does not have comparable scientific expertise available for advice and consultation. The Japanese are forming an Asbestos Information Association but were not sufficiently organized to send a delegation to this Conference.

As the full text of all formal presentations will be available shortly I shall comment now only on the highlights. A copy of the agenda is attached.

The first address was given by Dr. Walter J. Smither, Medical Director of Cape Asbestos. He presented no new data except some information on treatment of mesothelioma and asbestosis. He reported no progress in the treatment of mesothelioma. Two cases of asbestosis are presently being treated but as yet there are no positive results.

During discussion Dr. Vigliani reported that four mesothelioma cases had been treated by injections and surgery. To date one has died and three are still living but no conclusions can be reached. He reported he knew of no treatment for asbestosis.

Dr. Smither stated he did not believe ingestion was hazardous and that the spread of asbestos must be blood-born. This latter comment may be of significance in relation to a request recently received from a Lancaster doctor to take blood tests on Manheim workers.

Dr. Smither emphasized the importance of discouraging smoking among asbestos workers.

M. Join and Dr. Holmes discussed the ILO Geneva Conference in some detail. Proceedings of this Conference are available for those who may be interested. I again recommend that this report be required reading for every R/M manager concerned with asbestos containing products. It is not only an excellent summary of the asbestos health issue but is clear evidence of the direct interest on the part of the ILO in developing international controls on the safe use of asbestos.

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Regulations and controls were discussed country by country. France presently has controls only with respect to medical surveillance programs. There are no work-place controls but a committee associated with la Chambre Syndicale de L'Amiante is preparing recommendations for the government. This committee, COFEREBA, is composed of five medical doctors and research scientists all with University affiliations. They are available to la Chambre Syndicale for advice and consultation.

The British regulations have not changed except for a new provision which requires registration of all asbestos workers. Dr. Smither was questioned repeatedly on the adequacy of the British Occupational Health Standard for asbestos because it is the basis for regulations in all other countries. In all cases his answer was "ask me in 20 years".

The Scandinavian countries tend to follow the lead of the British though their controls are more strict partly because of extremely militant union pressure. In some countries crocidolite is completely banned as it is in the U.K. The German situation is outlined in considerable detail in the enclosed translation of an address by Herr Schmidt. This may be of particular interest to R/M International.

Italy has tended to follow the U.S. with respect to fiber limits. The present limit is five fibers per cc but it will probably go down to two. All cases of asbestosis must be reported to the authorities and any case of even suspected fibrosis automatically receives compensation if the worker has been associated with the asbestos industry.

M. Cyril Latty conducted a lengthy discussion on the possibility of setting up an international industry-sponsored and operated Safety Commission to balance the efforts of the International Labor Organization. He was followed by Alex Cross of the U.K. who pointed out the difficulties in organizing and operating such an international body. He commented on the difficulties he had experienced during the formation of the Asbestos Information Committee in England and stated that the Committee would not have been successful had it not been for the complete support of the highest level of management which recognized the serious nature of the threats to the well being of the asbestos industry.

News media attacks on the industry were also covered on a country by country basis. The U.K. is having the greatest difficulty. All of the countries are very much concerned about the enormous amount of adverse publicity being generated in the United States. A television program produced by Granada TV and shown on U.K. television entitled, "Killer Dust--A Standard Mistake", was shown by Wilfred Howard. The film features Dr. Selikoff, Dr. Holmes and Dr. Lewinsohn and describes the Lewinsohn/Selikoff controversy in some, though inaccurate, detail. Industry does not come off well in this presentation.

In response to M. Latty's call for the establishment of an international industry-sponsored and operated Safety Commission, Mr. Hardie presented a Draft Resolution (attached) proposing the establishment of a Standing Committee to provide continuity and a means of ensuring cooperation and collaboration between national organizations between the proposed biennial International Conferences. It was further proposed that an ad hoc working group be designated to develop a charter for the Standing Committee and submit recommendations to the Conference Chairmen not later than March 31, 1975.

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Prior to a vote on the Draft Resolution Mr. Hardie nominated the following persons to serve on the ad hoc working group: Johnsen - Denmark; Join - France: Robock - Germany; Cross - U.K.; Marsh - U.S.; Pieuze - Canada. Lepoutre of Belgium was nominated from the floor. Following lengthy discussion the Draft Resolution was unanimously approved.

At a subsequent meeting of the ad hoc committee, Mr. Cross was elected Chairman and the first meeting was scheduled for January 22-24 in London. Mr. Cross estimated that three meetings would be required by the ad hoc working group to complete the tasks assigned to it by the Conference by March 31, 1975...

On December 11 the Executive Committee of the AIA/NA authorized funds to cover the participation of the U.S. in the ad hoc working group. When its task is completed the ad hoc working group will be dissolved.

It is difficult to document adequately in a reasonable space the full benefits derived from participation in conferences such as these.. The knowledge gained through informal contacts is at least equal to and probably exceeds that obtained from the formal presentations. Contacts which can be followed up are, of course, an invaluable bonus.

I am convinced that had the U.S. industry fully participated in the international meetings from the beginning the industry would be far better prepared to cope with the technical requirements of compliance with regulations and could have avoided much of the distressing and distracting publicity. More importantly, however, more protective measures for more workers would have been undertaken at an earlier time.

John H. Marsh

Attachments
CC: Messrs. J. J. Magenheimer
J. T. Trainor
I. H. Weaver

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