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ASBESTOS WORKERS' HEALTH PROGRAM
DR. IRVING J. SELIKOFF

We now have copies of Dr. Selikoff's report (published in the April 6, 1964 issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association) describing his early findings and observations after reviewing the medical histories of more than 1500 members of the Insulation and Asbestos Workers Union located in the New York City and Newark, New Jersey areas.

This report does not identify any other insulating materials than asbestos and it relates all biological reactions to asbestos exposure even though it is stated that "building trades insulation workers have relatively light, intermittent exposure to asbestos."

The startling part of the report is the high incidence of cancer among insulation workers. Dr. Selikoff's data would seem to indicate that insulation workers have from 6 to 7 times more lung cancer and about 3 times more cancer of the stomach, colon and rectum than the general male population.

It is our understanding that Dr. Selikoff has received grants that will permit him to continue his investigation of the medical histories of insulation workers on a nation-wide scale. Consequently, his activities will continue to be of considerable interest to us. We are also told that he will attempt to generate as much publicity for this project as is possible. His ability to interest the American Medical Association in the current program and to get his report published in their Journal attests to his public relations capabilities.

Dr. Selikoff spoke before the joint annual conference of A.I.H.A. and the A.C.G.I.H. in Philadelphia last week using the same basic data that was used in the J.A.M.A. article. His talk was later printed in a Philadelphia newspaper.

Because Dr. Selikoff's project embraces only workers in the insulation unions and because the proposed study will eventually involve all members of these labor organizations, it is obvious that Fiberglas will, sooner or later, become a subject of investigation. We will continue to follow Dr. Selikoff's activities closely and will recommend any programs that are needed to protect our interests.

F. H. Edwards

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