

Perilous Particles

Tiny Asbestos Fibers Pose a Health Threat To Workers and Public

Long Exposure Can Result In Lung Disease, Cancer; Industry Seeks Solutions

'The Bodies Are in the Street'

By BARRY NEWMAN

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

NEW YORK—At Joseph Marino's gas station on the fringe of Manhattan's Spanish Harlem, the proven method of cleaning an old brake assembly goes like this: Pull off the wheel, aim an air hose at the exposed parts and blow the dust out.

A cloud of brown dust invariably flies right into the mechanics' faces, says Mr. Marino. But it doesn't bother them. "We got masks and everything," Mr. Marino shrugs. "The guys don't use them. What the hell."

What the mechanics don't seem to know—like thousands of other mechanics—is that the brown dust is dangerous. Brake linings are made of asbestos. And if a mechanic breathes in enough dust from the worn-out linings it could eventually kill him.

The lethal quality of tiny, indestructible asbestos fibers that lodge in the lung is well known. Widely publicized studies by Dr. Irving Selikoff of the Mount Sinai School of Medicine lead him to predict that of the roughly 250,000 asbestos industry workers today, about 85,000 will die unnecessarily of occupational cancer. "In the next 10 to 15 years we will enter the asbestos cancer era," says Dr. Selikoff. "This is one of the great disasters of our time."

Hazards for Others, Too

The asbestos industry is well aware of the problem and is taking action to combat it, though critics say the steps aren't as drastic as the situation demands. But asbestos industry workers aren't the only ones who might fall prey to the lung cancers and other diseases caused by the mineral's irritating fibers. It's likely that millions of workers in other industries using asbestos fibers could be affected, as well as ordinary people who have come into contact with asbestos in the atmosphere.

Perhaps the most tragic fact is that for those who have already been sufficiently exposed, changes in procedures and standards of asbestos use—including a new set announced yesterday by the Department of Labor—are meaningless. It takes as many as 40 years after the first exposure for asbestos-related diseases to surface. Controls instituted now will indeed have an effect, but not for decades.

Harry Bailey is one man who isn't likely to find much solace in the new standards. Mr. Bailey isn't an asbestos worker. He's a bricklayer in a Mobil Oil Corp. refinery alongside the Delaware River in Paulsboro, N.J. He has been working at the plant for 33 years, and every year he has gone to the company medical department for a chest X ray.

"They never said there was anything wrong with me," says 54-year-old Mr. Bailey, and in

What's News

Business and Finance

THE PAY BOARD slashed a deferred wage boost to 7% a year from 11%, the first such case decided by the panel. The ruling won't necessarily set a firm precedent for the more than 200 other challenged deferred raises in existing contracts. Yesterday's cutback affects butchers' union pacts with three Philadelphia food-store chains.

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Gold's price climbed still higher internationally as speculative demand for the metal accelerated. The London close was a record \$64.85 an ounce, up \$3.35 in the biggest-ever one-day spurt. Supplies continued tight, with reduced South African offerings blamed.

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Domestic natural gas advanced to the highest free market price on record, 73 cents a 1,000 cubic feet, in a pact between Westrans Industries and Johnson Rubber. Separately, the chairman of Texas Gas Transmission predicted the FPC will seek to extend its authority to such currently unregulated intrastate sales.

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FPC authority to allocate natural gas supplies to users during the present shortage was upheld by the Supreme Court. That decision and others yesterday backing the FCC and ICC suggested the court isn't reversing a decade-long trend of enlarging powers of federal regulators of business.

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Five antibiotics makers' challenge of the judge assigned to rule on about 50 antitrust damage cases still pending against them was refused by the Supreme Court. Justices separately restricted sonic-boom suits against the U.S., decided Citibank may claim that loss of its Cuban branches offsets a Banco Nacional de Cuba claim, and ruled that a patent-infringement suit against an alien may be brought in any federal district court, despite a patent-law provision.

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Ford's retesting of 1973 models for emission-control certification is being secured by extraordinary precautions. Hood locks, security guards and closed-circuit TV are being used, the new executive in charge following a shake-up disclosed.

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Kennecott Copper filed the first

World-Wide

McGOVERN SAID: I'D GO TO HANOI to end the war; he won four primaries.

After four victories Tuesday, the Democratic presidential hopeful said that if elected President, he would go to Hanoi, Paris "or anywhere in the world" to reach an agreement with North Vietnam for an end to the war and release of U.S. prisoners. He repeated his pledge that, if elected, he would end U.S. involvement in the war within 90 days of taking office. McGovern announced plans for a week-end trip to the South to seek party unity, and added he would be receptive to offers from Humphrey and Muskie to back his candidacy.

Humphrey told reporters he could accept Wallace as his running mate if the Alabamian would go along with "a good liberal Democratic platform." Wallace is second only to McGovern in the total number of delegates.

A sweeping environmental measure, Proposition Nine, was rejected by California voters. It would have prohibited a wide range of activities thought by some to be harmful to the environment. In San Francisco, meanwhile, voters elected four backers of school integration to the seven-man school board.

PROPERTY TAX FUNDING of schools will be reviewed by the Supreme Court.

As do 48 other states, Texas places heavy reliance on local property taxes to finance its schools. Texas' law was challenged by Mexican-Americans, and a district court ordered the state to equalize school spending so the quality of education didn't depend on local wealth. The district court had noted that school districts with high property values had low property tax rates, while those with low property values had high rates. The court also found that poor districts produced only \$21 a pupil from property taxes, while affluent districts produced \$307 a pupil.

The district court held the Constitution's equal-protection clause required "fiscal neutrality." Thus, it voided the Texas system, saying it discriminated in favor of wealthier families.

Suspects can be put in lineups without a lawyer on hand, the high court held. It also ruled that states can't indefinitely commit criminal suspects found incompetent to stand trial. And the Justices said that dependent children whose parents are away for any reason, including military service, are eligible for welfare benefits. A California regulation had barred aid-to-dependent-children payments to "military orphans."

Additional funds for health care were voted by the House Appropriations Committee. In approving an extra \$764 million for health work and research as part of a \$23 billion HEW money bill, the panel said that, while Nixon has committed himself to major attacks on cancer and other diseases, his budget requests for fiscal 1973 don't provide enough money to meet his goals. The Senate, meanwhile, voted 72-0 to spend \$90 million a year for five years to fight communicable diseases, particularly venereal ones. That bill goes to the House.

Resistance to airline hijackers was urged by

House



PERCENTAGE change in rental housing to 5.8% from 1971, the Com.

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