INTER/OFFICE COMMUNICATION

PLAINTIFF'S EXHIBIT tabbies ACS-124d

To J. E. Zeller, Lancaster

February 6, 1967

From A. L. Stokely, Washington

Subject Asbestosis

You may be aware that the Richmond Local of the Asbestos Workers have had all of their men take a chest X-ray to determine if they had asbestosis. A diagnosis of asbestosis was made in quite a number of men, including six in our employ.

Although none of these men have lost any work, they have been receiving treatment and subsequent X-rays, and the charge for the cost of all X-rays after the first one which indicated asbestosis, have been forwarded to us.

Aetna had previously advised us that they were not liable unless asbestosis was certified and that it had been contacted while in Armstrong's employ.

Aetna was in error. The Workmens Compensation Law in the State of Virginia considers an occupational disease to be the same as an accident. Therefore, when the first X-ray indicated asbestosis, additional X-rays for diagnosis and checking on treatment are our responsibility and Aetna has paid them.

I really wonder if we have been sufficiently realistic in our thinking concerning asbestosis. Originally, we had half-way assumed that only those with a high intake of alcohol contacted the disease, and that most of them were quite happy to live on compensation without further effort.

I have heard it hinted that this doctor in New York who appears to be such an expert on asbestosis was being somewhat unprofessional in his efforts to present a needlessly frightening occurrence of the disease.

Nonetheless, six of our men in Richmond have enough asbestosis to require considerable additional investigation by a pretty-well-thought-of doctor from the University of Virginia Medical College. They are not men of high alcoholic intake or frankly of any great desire not to put in a good day's work.

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The potential for disability in the future would appear to be very real, and the cost to us under Workmens Compensation could be quite considerable. Aetna doesn't seem to get into it any deeper than to determine that they don't pay for the first X-ray, but they pay for the future ones.

I'd like to recommend a strong push on our part, and I would hope also on the part of the other National Insulation Contractors and their compensation carriers, to investigate asbestosis very thoroughly.

Not only is it quite obvious that prodigious compensation claims are possible for the future, but more importantly I think we owe our workmen every effort to investigate and to see if we can avoid this disease, which is bound to be some where between partly disabling and fatal.

I think we ought to try our best to get Aetna hot on the investigation of ways to minimize or avoid asbestosis.

ALS

H. N. Nunis, Richmond