FILE NAME: Asbestos Sacks and Bags (ASB)

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THE LONDON OCEAN TRADES EMPLOYERS ASSOCIATION LIMITED

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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SECRETARY:
D. L. BENNETT

75-79 Mansell Street,
LONDON E.1.

Telephone: 01-481 2617

21st April, 1967

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Dear Sir,

Asbestos - Raw

As you are aware, difficulties have once again arisen in connection with raw asbestos and that both Trade Unions have officially indicated at a meeting of the Ocean Trades Group Joint Committee, that their members will not handle the commodity unless it is packed in sealed containers. Whilst in most trades the improved pack has been welcomed by the labour, there have been instances when packs have been damaged in stowage, either by rough handling when loaded, or during the course of the discharge of adjacent cargo at an intermediate port, and on other occasions, damage has resulted from the absence of a block stowage or by over-stowing with unsuitable cargo. Quantities of loose have, as a result, been present in the stowage and, in view of the adverse publicity given to asbestos of late on television and by the press, the Trade Union representatives are no longer willing to prevail upon their members to handle it.

The issue was referred to the Port Labour Executive Committee and the decision of that body reads as follows:-

> "The P.L.E.C. agree to refer the whole subject to the National Joint Council who should be requested, after appropriate Government consultation, to secure that asbestos should be shipped in some form of container packing; seeing that containterisation was increasing, it seemed the suitable type of transportation for this cargo. In the meantime, the Unions should be urged to persuade the men to continue working the commodity and the Ocean Shipowners would be asked to make representations to ensure asbestos being carried in the interim in impervious-lined bags properly stowed and every arrangement possible made to eliminate spillage."

In these circumstances, I shall be grateful if you will advise your principals who carry this commodity of the difficulties prevailing in the Port of London, They should be recommended to ensure that consignments are contained in impervious-lined bags and given a block stowage, suitably protected from other cargo which might cause damage in transit, or on being discharged. Unless these recommendations are carefully followed, there is little hope of asbestos being discharged in the Port of London and there is also a grave risk that men will refuse to discharge other cargo from a hold wherein loose asbestos is present.

Whilst copies of this letter are being made available to the Secretary of the London Shipowner's Dock Labour Committee and the London Non-Federated Shipowner's Dock Labour Organisation, with a request that they be circulated to members, further copies are available should you wish to forward them to your members.

Yours faithfully,

D.L.BENNETT

Secretary