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1970—THE YEAR IN REVIEW

1970 has been an active year for the Asbestos Industry. Ecology is uppermost in the minds of all people and much effort is being put forth in the search for ways to improve the environment of man. For instance, in response to President Nixon's message to the Congress in which he said the task of cleaning up our environment calls for a total mobilization of all of us—involving governments at every level and requiring the help of every citizen—the U.S. Department of the Interior sponsored a "National Environmental Pollution Conference and Exposition" with the hope of coming up with some productive answers to the search for new and more efficient methods, approaches and techniques for winning the battle for a better national environment.

This is not a new field of endeavor so far as our Industry is concerned. For many years the Asbestos Industry has been working toward bettering its techniques to control and virtually eliminate dust at the mines and at the manufacturing plants. These efforts are now being extended to include dust suppression at construction sites with the ultimate aim of improving the environment of both the worker and the general public. Many companies are now enforcing regulations and encouraging their employees at the job site to wear newly-developed, effective respiratory equipment to combat the hazards of dust pollutants. Rules of good housekeeping are also being strengthened and executed to contain dust at the construction site and to prevent its release to the atmosphere. Laws and recommendations are being issued not only by industry but also by trade associations and government agencies. Following is a brief account of what has been recorded in ASBESTOS during the year concerning environmental and industrial health and safety.

ENVIRONMENTAL/INDUSTRIAL HEALTH & SAFETY

A research team from the Medical Faculty of *McGill University* conducted a three-year survey into the health of workers in Quebec's asbestos mining industry. Among the findings of the study is that at present levels of dust exposure in modern asbestos mills, even 30 years employment

would probably not carry any measurable risk of lung cancer. The results are encouraging in that they suggest the risk of contracting respiratory cancer is virtually confined to levels of dust exposure which are controllable, if not already controlled, in most Canadian asbestos mines and mills. The study was supported by substantial grants from the Institute of Occupational and Environmental Health of the Quebec Asbestos Mining Association as well as from the U.S. Public Health Service and formed part of an international research program coordinated by the Union Internationale Contre le Cancer. The research program will continue, with Asbestos Industry support, for another five years.

The *U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare* awarded a first-year grant to the University of Nevada for a study of the "Aqueous Surface Chemistry of Asbestos Minerals."

The *Insulation Industry Hygiene Research Program* continued to issue its quarterly Insulation Hygiene Progress Reports. Included in the reports were such items as (1) the testing of systems designed to reduce dusts produced as a result of cutting molded insulating materials with band saws; (2) field testing and subsequent utilization of a new plastic bag for shipping and mixing asbestos cement; (3) the promulgation of interim orders governing the spraying, on construction sites in New York City, of any insulation material containing asbestos; and (4) a study of conditions existing in connection with insulation work on many types of ships.

Mount Sinai School of Medicine sponsored an historical first in occupational medicine by presenting a four-day postgraduate course on all aspects of the health effects of asbestos.

An "Occupational Health Program" was approved and an agreement was made for its implementation by the Trustees of the *Western States Asbestos Health Plan.*

The "Health & Safety Council" of the *Asbestos Cement Products Association* is actively engaged in initiating, developing and directing studies and public relations programs designed to lawfully promote and foster such health and safety policies and programs for the asbestos-cement industry as will tend to appraise and resolve any health and safety problems peculiar to that industry. The Council recently published a

pamphlet on "Recommended Practices for Fabricating, Handling and Applying Asbestos-Cement Products in the Building and Construction Industries."

The *Sprayed Mineral Fiber Manufacturers Association* issued a statement advising that New York City regulations for spraying asbestos fireproofing materials on large buildings are being followed fully and carefully to keep asbestos dust from spreading into the air at construction sites. SA. FMA issued a revised code of work practices for its member companies and their employees, designed to further improve the safe handling of asbestos-containing products intended for spraying.

The *U.S. Bureau of Mines* is conducting Federal inspections and is enforcing, as of July 31st, Federal health and safety standards for operating non-coal mines.

BBA Group Ltd. published a comprehensive and informative description of the formation and activities of the "Industrial Health Unit, 1959-1969."

Under the new Asbestos Regulations now in force in the United Kingdom, the protection of workers from industrial disease which might arise from the inhalation of asbestos dust became a statutory obligation wherever asbestos materials are used in such a way as to give rise to the emission of dust dangerous to the health of employees. For the assistance of those concerned with control of working conditions in accordance with the Asbestos Regulations, the Environmental Control Committee of the *Asbestosis Research Council* prepared a series of eight "Control and Safety Guides."

"Asbestos: Health Precautions in Industry" is the topic of the 49th in a series of booklets entitled "Health & Safety At Work," prepared by the *Department of Employment and Productivity* and the *Central Office of Information*, London, England.

"The Asbestos Rule" will take effect July 11, 1971, thereby making *Queensland* the first State in *Australia* to introduce a Rule controlling work with asbestos and to prevent the occupational disease "asbestosis."

The *Canadian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy* printed various articles in the CIM Bulletin concerning the control of dust. Among them are: "Fibrous Dust—Its Measurement and Control," "Dust—Sampling Research and Its Applica-



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