number of workers grew who were discovered to have had some, often trivial, exposure to asbestos in their working lifetime, the number of deaths he predicted grew by leaps and bounds. To be fair, he would preface each calculation with the words: "If our numbers are correct, we can predict...." but the disclaimer was seldom if ever picked up by the media, nor was its import understood.

Even when he tried to clarify for the media what he meant, it was often ignored in favor of the more dramatic. For example, in late 1972, CBS News contacted me for a response to a statement Dr. Selikoff had made at a congressional hearing. This was at a time when controversy raged over the fate of workers in U.S. shipyards during World War II, some of whom had substantial exposure to asbestos insulations used aboard navy ships. The reporter said Dr. Selikoff had predicted that 2 million former shipyard workers would die of asbestos-related diseases before the end of the century. I explained that he had misunderstood what was said. Since Dr. Selikoff had made the same prediction many times, I was able to quote him almost verbatim: "If our numbers are correct, of the 2 million workers employed in U.S. shipyards during the Second World War, 40 percent will die of asbestos-related diseases before the end of the century." I put him in contact with Dr. Selikoff, who confirmed to the reporter that he had gotten the prediction wrong. Relieved, I then proceeded to explain to the reporter why we considered the prediction totally off base. That evening, towards the end of the broadcast, Walter Cronkite solemnly intoned, "Noted asbestos researcher Irving J. Selikoff today predicted that 2 million American shipyard workers would die of asbestos-related disease before the end of the century. A spokesman for the asbestos industry said the number was too high." The next morning I called the reporter at CBS back to complain about the spot. Hadn't they talked to Dr. Selikoff? Hadn't he told them they had it wrong? He answered yes to both questions but said, "We used what we *thought* he said at the hearing because it made a better story."

Science-Based Communications

We continued on track with our efforts. We developed and distributed a series of media background papers on the various aspects of the asbestos issue. Of particular concern was mesothelioma, because it was the only asbestos-related disease known to occur outside of the industrial setting. If so-called "neighborhood" and "household" cases were showing up with increasing frequency in Great Britain and South Africa, how soon would it be before they began occurring here, and with what level of public outcry?

Fortunately, the scientific evidence was mounting that nearly all cases of mesothelioma could be traced to exposure to either of the two amphibole vari-