For the first time at a conference of this nature, no one raised any argument as to cigarette smoking and its direct contribution to pulmonary fibrosis.

Negative:

No radically new developments and findings were revealed during this meeting.

Before the end of the year 1978, the exposure limit in the U.K. is anticipated to be reduced to one (1) fiber per cubic centimeter.

Based on information presented during this conference, it is anticipated that most doctors will refuse to discard asbestos exposure as a possible cause of various diseases, regardless of the length and degree of exposure!

On July 14, 1978, ABC Television will be broadcasting a documentary on asbestos, and starting on July 17, the Government will broadcast radio and television ads explaining the dangers of asbestos exposure. These ads will be directed specifically towards the shipping, construction and automotive industries. Newspaper ads will also be taken out in strategically located citis such as Newport News and Detroit. The potential impact of this campaign is difficult to predict, but it is entirely conceivable that some kind of asbestos hysteria could break out.

Although no new and tougher exposure limite are anticipated as a result of this conference, the volume of law suits are expected to increase drastically. I had the opportunity to listen to one of the ads, which simply requests that anyone ever exposed to asbestos visit his physician. Since, however, there is no known cure for some of the ailments, it is quite possible that some will go straight to their lawyers instead.

The asbestos iddustry has lost two recent law suits. One was a mesothelioma case allegedly resulting from exposure in a Virginia shipyard. The exposure took place only two years prior to filing the law suit. This in spite of the fact that the latency period for mesothelioma is around 30 years and that mesothelioma can be caused by other materials as well. The plaintiff was awarded $750,000 in this suit. The other suit involved a $150,000 award in Illinois.