MEETING OF OSHA'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CONSTUCTION SAFETY AND HEALTH

Harvey, IL, was location of OSHA's Advisory Committee on Construction Safety and Health meeting on May 16-17. Agenda included general discussion of standards development and enforcement activities, as well as problems associated with asbestos medical surveillance in the construction industry.

The committee passed a resolution calling for a separate vertical coke oven emission standard for the construction industry, to serve as a model for application of other OSHA health standards to the industry. Resolution was passed despite warning by John Martonik, OSHA industrial hygienist, "if the committee decides that medical surveillance isn't an important part of a construction industry standard, I don't think OSHA will believe them." Regarding problem of recordkeeping, Basil Whiting, Jr., deputy asst. secretary of labor (OSHA), said difficulties have to resolved by industry and labor and that "Health standards apply across the board. We have an extreme reluctance to impose different health standards on construction."

For benefit of committee, Richard L. Trachtman, Esq., AIA/NA staff, gave presentation on Association's work to date in development of an alternative for an asbestos standard in the construction industry using the work practices concept. Trachtman emphasized that the unique characteristics of the construction industry require special consideration for application of health standards. It should be noted that, notwithstanding remarks of Basil Whiting above, OSHA recognized need for a separate standard for occupational exposure to asbestos in the construction industry by excluding it from the proposed revision to the present asbestos standard which was issued Oct, 1975.

DR. BINGHAM RESPONDS TO AIA/NA REQUEST FOR RETRACTION

In letter dated Mar. 22, AIA/NA President [redacted]. Dougherty called upon Assistant Secretary of Labor (OSHA) Dr. Eula Bingham to retract "with appropriate explanation" a Labor Press release which included misleading and scientifically unsupportable statements regarding asbestos health risks (N&N Mar.).

On May 7, Dr. Bingham responded with the following statement: "While I do not believe that a retraction would be appropriate, we will take your comments into account in preparing future information materials on asbestos."

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