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HEALTH & ENVIRONMENTAL
SCIENCES, U.S.A.

~~LK STORY 2070~~

~~BOB OUBRE OC OYSTER CREEK~~

These may be of interest
but I didn't think they
were worth copying. Please
return.

It sounds like the Unions
are getting very active in
England. T.R. 8/15/80

FROM: T. R. TORKELSON
1803 Building
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R&S 113150

IMPERIAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES LIMITED
PLASTICS DIVISION—WELWYN GARDEN CITY

From: J STAFFORD
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To:

RECEIVED

AUG 25 1980

VCM TECH CTR

Dr F W Best
Dr D M Ferguson
Mr D Ryerson
Mr M J S Gibbons
Dr J G Kasmuller
Mr J C Thomas
Dr T Garlanda
Dr J P Tassignon
Mr P G Claus
Mr J Lawrence
Mr J Seawell
Dr T R Torkelson
File

0000413

VCM - ASTMS

You may care to see the attached press cuttings. Re the Guardian article the reporter has compressed and bowdlerised our spokesman's comments. Mr Rigby retired from ICI in 1972 under our voluntary retirement scheme and he took another job to supplement his pension. We did not know he was ill until 1979. As soon as we learned his condition was related to his pre 1972 VCM exposure we offered him membership of the ICI VCM Scheme and advised him to discuss the terms with his union solicitors or his personal solicitors if he was not a member of a union. We are given to understand that Mr Rigby acted via his solicitors.

J Stafford

JS/SEW/DSO-16
30 July 1980

R&S 113151

Deaths prompt call for stricter code

By Angela Singer

The deaths of three BP plastic workers from angiosarcoma, a liver cancer previously thought to be rare, has led to trade union demands for stricter standards on the toxic gas, vinyl chloride monomer (VCM), an essential ingredient of PVC.

The three worked in the same building and died within eight months of each other—the last in June this year.

The hazards of the gas have been recognised in Britain since 1974. The Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs, and the General and Municipal Workers Union will be discussing stricter controls with the TUC early next month.

In a report published by ASTMS yesterday, the union demanded early retirement for sufferers; improved compensation schemes; a lower level of exposure to the gas; an end to the cleaning of vats by hand; and adequate personal monitoring and research on VCM's harmful effects.

The report said action was needed "to ensure adequate treatment for the victims of the gross complacency of chemical companies prior to 1974" and "to force companies now to reduce exposure to the lowest feasible level."

Mr Roger Lyons, national chemicals officer for ASTMS, launching the report, said that no one knew who would be next—men had died aged 48 and 37. The disease could take up to 15 years to develop.

Mrs Sheila McKechnie,

health and safety officer for ASTMS, said new information from the Bologna Cancer Institute showed that very low levels of VCM could induce a cancer tumour.

This raised questions as to whether the present standard of protection was adequate. Research also showed that VCM caused cancer in the brain and other parts of the body.

Mrs McKechnie said there had been a groundswell of reaction after the three men had died, at the BP chemicals plant at Barry, South Glamorgan.

This had been strengthened by an agreement signed by a foreman at ICI Hillhouse, in Lancashire a few days before he died in November last year. Mr Jack Rigby accepted compensation and agreed not to sue the company.

Mr Rigby had retired sick in 1972. He had received no compensation so had to take a job as a security man at Fleetwood Dock.

A spokesman for ICI yesterday said compensation had been delayed because of the difficulty of diagnosing the disease.

The Chemical Industries Association said yesterday that all British companies were fully complying with new stringent standards.

"Safety in the United Kingdom matches the best international practices," he said.

BP said its compensation scheme had just been finalised. The difficulty had been that angiosarcoma was accepted as a cancer caused by VCM, but other liver diseases could be caused both by VCM and other factors.

June 30th July 1980 page 5

Disease thesis embargoed at company's request

By Nicholas Timmins

The University of Wales agreed to a request from British Petroleum to embargo a doctoral thesis on vinyl chloride (VCM) related diseases written by the medical officer of BP's Barry plant, near Cardiff, a white-collar union revealed yesterday.

VCM is used at the plant to make the plastic PVC, and has been linked to a rare form of liver cancer, other liver conditions, club fingers and the development of a cold, hypersensitive condition in the fingers known as Raynaud's phenomenon.

Mr John Matthews, a research officer with the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs, said yesterday that the two-year embargo was apparently imposed because the thesis contained details, although not by name, of cases that could have helped in compensation claims.

The thesis, by Dr David Williams, was finally published early this year. BP said yesterday that it had asked Dr Williams to keep the thesis for an MD degree confidential be-

tween himself and the medical school.

But the company claimed "this was done in the interests of those claiming compensation". BP has eight claims for compensation at the Barry plant outstanding.

Publication of the cases in detail and in the overall context of the plant's operations might have had a detrimental effect on the level of compensation awarded by the courts. BP did not want to lay itself open to that charge.

The university's academic secretary, Mr R. W. J. Evans, said that he would not give the reasons for the embargo, and that he understood it might be the subject of legal action.

The imposition of such an embargo was normal practice, he said, both at Wales and other universities, although the university was usually reluctant to agree to them.

Dr Aubrey Treisman-Dickenson, who as vice-chancellor of the university formally agreed to the embargo, said such restrictions were normally imposed when the findings had commercial significance.

Financial Times 30th July 1980 p 11

BP Chemicals in health dispute

BY IAN CAMERON, CHEMICALS CORRESPONDENT

TRADES UNION officials yesterday accused BP Chemicals of suppressing information about the impact of vinyl chloride monomer, a chemical used to make plastic, on its employees' health BP Chemicals said, however, that it had sought to stop publication for legal reasons.

National officials of the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staff said the company had asked the University of Wales to "embargo" a thesis on vinyl chloride monomer written by one of BP's medical advisers.

They said the university had kept the thesis secret for two years after it was submitted.

The officials, speaking at a Press conference launching an ASTMS report on VCM health risks, said the thesis information could have helped sick employees to fight legal actions for compensation against BP Chemicals, if it had been available earlier. The University of Wales published the thesis last January.

BP Chemicals said much of

it was based on previously published material. Parts of it, however, detailed medical histories of individual workers at BP Chemicals' VCM plant at Barry, South Wales.

Some of them had actions pending against the company on the grounds that their illnesses had been caused by exposure to VCM. BP Chemicals had therefore asked for the thesis to be kept secret because it might be sub judice.

But BP Chemicals said there were still eight compensation cases from Barry outstanding, even though the thesis had been published in January after a two-year gap. It said "in theory" parts of the thesis could still be sub judice. It had not asked for the embargo on the thesis to be lifted. The university acted on its own initiative.

BP Chemicals said yesterday it had just introduced a compensation scheme for employees whose health suffered because of exposure to VCM.

The ASTMS report says

research shows exposure to VCM can cause a wide variety of illnesses, including liver diseases and cancer.

It calls for the present exposure limit to be cut from three parts of VCM per million parts of air to one part per million. The report says a limit of 1ppm was introduced in the U.S.

It demands early retirement with full pension and pay, for workers exposed to VCM before 1974, when the chemical was first recognised as a serious health risk. Before 1974 the exposure limit for VCM had been 500ppm.

Last night the Chemical Industries Association said the 1ppm exposure limit in the U.S. was a "target," not a legally enforceable standard. Conditions in VCM plants in the UK were as good as those in the U.S. in some cases British plants operated at a 1ppm level.

VCM is used to make PVC, polyvinyl chloride. Principal UK producers are BP Chemicals and ICI.

Daily Mirror 30th July 1980

Oil giant helps PVC victims

By PAUL FOOT and RONALD BEDFORD

BRITISH Petroleum is still putting the finishing touches to a "special compensation" scheme for workers who are suffering from the effects of vinyl chloride, the "killer gas" used for making PVC.

The scheme was an-

nounced during hearings by the HSE and the Daily Mirror, who the deaths of three PVC workers from a rare liver disease during the last eight months.

Yesterday a union demanded stricter health controls for factories producing plastics with vinyl chloride.

The Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs also demanded better compensation for workers injured in plants before the full extent of the health risks was known.

Its report urged early retirement with full pen-

WHICH OF US
WILL BE THE
NEXT TO DIE?

The Mirror, July 17

sions and pay for workers exposed to vinyl chloride before 1974.

The union says it realises that these products are vitally important to Britain.

It adds that it wants a healthy plastic industry with total health protection for the workers.

R&S 113155

IMPERIAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES LIMITED
PLASTICS DIVISION--WELWYN GARDEN CITY

From: J STAFFORD
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To:

Mr R Hards
Mr B Hasler
Dr F W Best
Mr G Basker
Dr D M Ferguson
Mr D Ryerson
Mr M J S Gibbons
Dr J G Kammuller
Mr P G Claus
Mr J C Thomas
Dr J P Tassignon
Dr T Garlanda
Dr T R Torkelson
Mr J Lawrence
Mr J Seavell
Mr J Hadley

0000 413

VCM IN THE MEDIA

I enclose a typescript of an extremely boring and not very accurate programme on BBC Wales TV on 11 July mainly directed at BP. I also enclose a typescript of an interview on the local London Broadcasting Company radio of Roger Lyons of ASTMS at his Press Conference on 29 July. Mr Lyons' statement contains extraordinary inaccuracies.

In the holiday season, these union inspired activities are not reaching a large audience. I thought you should however be aware of them as part of a sustained campaign to get improved compensation terms for anyone who has been exposed to VCM in the past, especially early retirement on full pay for those exposed to VCM prior to 1974.

J Stafford

JS/SEW/DSO-16
31 July 1980

0000413

Report No. ICL 549.....

Transmitted on...BBC TV Wales - "Week in Week Out"

Length.....50 mins..

Date.....11th July, 1980.....

Time.....10.30 p.m.

Short Title.....V.C.M.....

R&S 113157

Vincent Kane: The white powder in the bowl is polyvinyl chloride. The gas from which it's made, a vinyl chloride monomer, V.C.M., is one of the deadliest substances used in the chemical industry. Prolonged contact with it can and has killed people. The bowl on the right contains pellets of P.V.C. This is the basic raw material for the plastics industry. Worldwide twelve million tons of P.V.C. was processed last year.

(Film)

The record industry is a big customer for P.V.C., the current slump in record sales has depressed demand, but there are any amount of containers, bottles, boxes, bowls and wrappings, all made of plastic, all made from P.V.C., all made from V.C.M. gas. Plastic is now the eighth most important raw material in the world. V.C.M. gas was for a long time used as the propellant in aerosols until the danger was recognised and the practice banned. There's been alarm about P.V.C. packaging for foodstuffs. In 1973 P.V.C. liquor bottles were banned in America, but it's the men in contact with V.C.M. during manufacture who have become ill and who have died.

(Film of funeral service)

This is the funeral last January of a worker from the B.P. factory at Barry. B.P. is one of Britain's major producers of P.V.C. He'd been exposed to V.C.M. in the days before its potentially lethal effects were acknowledged, but do we know everything now? How safe is this industry?

(Film)

B.P. at Barry admit that ten claims for compensation have been lodged by workers who've been in prolonged contact with V.C.M. - Vinyl Chloride Monomer - and suffered as a result. It wasn't until 1974 that the link between V.C.M. exposure and angiosarcoma, a rare liver cancer, was officially recognised. B.P. deny negligence on the grounds that they've always enforced whatever were the accepted safety standards of the time, but at the Vinotex plant near Sheffield,

where P.V.C. is produced it's a different story. In March twenty-nine workers from Vinotex were awarded damages by the Courts worth eight hundred and fifty-seven thousand pounds, including interest, for what the Judge called Vinyl Chloride disease.

The significant thing is Vinotex admitted negligence and liability and disputed the amount of damages. Mr. Justice Wolfe* awarded two men a hundred thousand pounds each and the rest sums between five and seventy thousand. In his Judgment he granted that the effect of exposure to V.C.M. was not at one period as well known as it is today, but he added 'even today the consequences are imperfectly understood'. But the trade unions are not unnaturally concerned to establish what risks of disease are incurred from contact with V.C.M.

Mr. David Gee: (Health and Safety, G.M.W.U.) Additional hazards are the bone disease, the sort of degeneration of the bones in the feet and the fingers, called A.O.L. and, second, liver cancer. Both of those are recognised for State compensation 1977. The new hazards are a range of things. Firstly there's a strange set of symptoms that we call V.C. disease which is pains in the joints, fatigue, impotency, lack of sex drive, perspiration, digestive troubles, a whole range of symptoms.

V. Kane: All these things have been definitely related to vinyl chloride?

Mr. Gee: Yes, they have. We've just got compensation of three-quarters of a million pounds for our members, twenty-seven members or twenty-nine members at Vinotex for just that series of symptoms. But that's not all in terms of new hazards. First of all there's lung damage, the lung has .. ceases its ability, or loses its ability to transfer oxygen into the bloodstream. Secondly, there's a reduction in capacity to take in oxygen and is another aspect of lung damage. Thirdly, there's damage to the liver other than liver cancer such as abnormalities in the way the liver functions. Fourthly and perhaps most importantly there's cancer of other sites, namely the brain, the lungs, the blood forming system and possibly the digest tracts and finally there's damage to the gene structure, the chromosomes that gets passed on by way of abnormal or high rate of abortions amongst wives of V.C.M. workers and possibly child defects as well.

Report No. ICI.549

Continuation No.2.

V. Kane: In the world's P.V.C. industry about eighty cases have been identified of angiosarcoma, liver cancer. In those cases the average latency period is over twenty years, so even though stringent precautions are now enforced men who were exposed in the past will continue to be identified for years to come. At B.P. nobody has won compensation for V.C.M. illness though one man has been fighting for it twelve years.

Mr. Fred Liddiard: On 20th December, looking forward to Christmas, preparing for it, sat down in the evening, I felt queer, I went upstairs and I had a lay down, had no option I had to make to the bathroom and was just covered in blood again, I didn't tell the wife first time, I just lay down again, it come over me again, passing blood, I just lay there, so I had to tell her and they called the doctor and they rushed me into hospital.

V. Kane: And that's where the surgeon asked you about V.C.M?

Mr. Liddiard: Afterwards they carried out various tests on me to find out what was wrong, I had another severe haemorrhage in hospital while I was there - I mean this was a saviour on this occasion, I was unconscious all day long, so I had the major operation and he told me that I was world medically famous I was in all the medical journals throughout the world and Dr. Stevens* had gone to lecture in America on my case, and that my trouble was definitely caused by V.C.M.

V. Kane: Do you know what the liver trouble is you had?

Mr. Liddiard: They won't tell me. It's my own opinion if you like but...

V. Kane: What do you think, Mr. Beer?

Mr. Beer: Well, I think it's angiosarcoma.

V. Kane: Do you suffer?

Mr. Beer: Now and again, but not ... well, you've got a job to say whether it's indigestion or not, in my case, but with angiosarcoma it's a terrible thing, you can have it for years but once it flares up you've got eight months to live, it's a growth in the main artery into the liver and they told me I'd got a blockage in the main artery to the liver, so it's obvious to me.

R&S 113159

Report No. CI.549

Continuation No.3.

Mr. Joe Gill: He told me I had a blood disorder when he was doing blood tests and he advised me another plant would better my life.

V. Kane: A blood disorder what?

Mr. Gill: Platelets mainly, more white ones than the red.

V. Kane: And anything else?

Mr. Gill: And eventually it was liver disorder.

V. Kane: You have liver damage?

Mr. Gill: Yes.

V. Kane: Do you know what?

Mr. Gill: It's the issue it is actually.

V. Kane: What are your symptoms?

Mr. Gill: Well, I get a lot of swelling in the stomach and a pain.

V. Kane: You're in pain much of the time are you?

Mr. Gill: Most of the time.

V. Kane: Some days, not every day?

Mr. Gill: No, not every day, no.

V. Kane: But you get bouts do you?

Mr. Gill: Yes.

V. Kane: And you're 37?

Mr. Gill: Yes.

V. Kane: Seeking a grasp of the diseases and conditions which the medical profession consider a result from exposure to V.C.M., I met a doctor who was the Consultant for Vinotex. The first condition he told me about was one which affected the hands, known as 'white finger'

Dr. C.F. Darke: This is the most striking condition in many ways because it disables the individual immediately. The hands tend to become slightly swollen, they also become cold and clammy as though you're holding a wet fish, they can't be straightened completely, nor can you make a complete grip and the movement is stiff and painful and then the fingers will suddenly for no good reason, or because of exposure to cold, go white, or blue and feel actually numb and dead.

V. Kane: White finger or blue finger, as it's sometimes called and the changes in circulation in the hands are known as Raynaud's Phenomenon. They're caused by blockages in the circulation of the blood especially in the thumb and in the little finger. It's not only the circulation that's affected. This x-ray shows bone damage sustained to the hands of a V.C.M. worker. You can see the change in the last joint of each finger.

Dr. Darke: The bones particularly affected are the last bones of the fingers and of the toes and usually a segment of the shaft is lost. This may be re-occupied in years to come but it does mean that the finger is unstable and painful and knobby and in severe cases other bones in the pelvis, the kneecaps, in parts of the feet and parts of the arms and even in the jaws, may be affected in a somewhat similar way.

V. Kane: This particle of P.V.C. dust has been magnified a thousand times. Men who've inhaled this dust regularly over a long period have also been taken ill.

Dr. Darke: In one individual who was disabled in this way specimens of lung were obtained which show changes suggesting a reaction to the inhalation of a particle. Now the particle has not been identified as a P.V.C particle in this instance but there are .. there is work going on in animals and I think also in the Sully Hospital in which there has been identification in the human of P.V.C.

V. Kane: And then we move to this hardening, fibrosis, this hardening of the tissues?

Dr. Darke: Of the skin.

V. Kane: Yes.

Dr. Darke: Yes, this is part of the picture of the circulatory changes which I think are antecedent, that the thickening of the skin is more disabling because movement is restricted and in one of the individuals I know of, the skin thickening affected the face and forearms, possibly the whole of the surface of the trunk that he is more or less encased in a kind of scar tissue so that free movements were impossible.

V. Kane: And this is a cancerous liver, it was in 1974 that a link between liver cancer and indiscriminate exposure to V.C.M. was established beyond a doubt.

Dr. Darke: The group of cases that have subsequently been found in chemical plants in which P.V.C. has been made clearly suggests that there is a direct relationship and this has been more and more established by studies of the liver of people who have had as yet not got the condition but we all fear may get the condition.

V. Kane: How clear is the evidence? Have you any idea how many cases there have been?

Dr. Darke: I think it's in ... throughout the world because really they are numerated, it's in the '60s and '70s I suspect, of actual cases of liver cancer and these are corroborated usually by fatality, by death.

V. Kane: One question I haven't asked you, Doctor, which occurs to me, could there be some connection between the two processes, the developing of the bone disease and then later of the cancer in the liver?

Dr. Darke: Well, I don't think it's related directly in that way. I think it is a feature of the whole effect of this exposure to this toxic gas in what might be called a multi-system disorder, in other words the bones, the skin, the spleen the liver, the blood, the lungs and perhaps other organs and tissues are affected as a result probably of circulating complexes in which the haematology is disturbed.

V. Kane: The claims now made against B.P. at Barry are for men who worked here in the '50/'60s and early '70s, P.5. At one time P.5 housed seventy polymerisers each of a thousand gallon capacity. Between a hundred and fifty and two hundred men are believed to have worked here in P.5. before the cancer link discovery in 1974. In the '60s tolerance of V.C.M. in the plant was five hundred parts per million in the atmosphere and more. Today the absolute limit is ten and the E.E.C. is seeking to establish a limit of three parts per million. It was the poly cleaners who appear to have been most exposed to V.C.M. Men whose job it was to clean the big polymerisers. To do this effectively meant going bodily into the polymeriser in which there may well have been an accumulation of V.C.M. gas. The poly cleaners who went in would soon know whether there was gas.

Report No. ICI.549

Continuation No.5.

Mr. Beer: If there was a lot of gas you'd know it because it's heavier than air and it'd be on the bottom, but very often you'd clean the top first and you'd go down to the bottom and as soon as you got down there, you'd realise it was gas.

V. Kane: Now .. describe the sensation.

Mr. Beer: Well, a burning sensation, like a chloroform but the worst part was if there wasn't much gas in the poly and you went in there, it would overcome you gradually and very often you'd find yourself going off and there was .. well, it used to alarm you but it's not a very delicate thing to say on the tele.

V. Kane: Go on tell us.

Mr. Beer: Well, your testacles used to tingle and that was a sure warning that you'd been over come by ...

V. Kane: By the gas. Were you ever pulled out?

Mr. Beer: I was never pulled out but I was out like several times. You'd get up the top of the ladder and when you got up to the top of the ladder you'd give a gasp and you'd lean over the poly because the poly .. you had to squeeze yourself to get into the poly, you couldn't go normal, you had to put your hands over your head so that your shoulders were narrower like, so you could slide in and when you tried to get out - by the time you got out like, you were exhausted.

V. Kane: Did you come into contact, apart from the fumes, with the slurry which sometimes escaped?

Mr. Beer: Oh, yes. Very often you'd be paddling in it.

V. Kane: Paddling in it?

Mr. Beer: Yes.

V. Kane: Was that a fairly frequent occurrence?

Mr. Beer: Oh yes, yes. We were told not to be frightened of it because it had no effect on you whatsoever. They said that during the War they used to use V.C.M. as a chloroform, so naturally we assumed that it was safe.

V. Kane: This smell that you talk about, can you describe it? What sort of smell?

R&S 113163

Report No. ICI.549

Continuation No.6.

Mr. Gill: Well, on the sweetish side more than anything and if you were in the area you could feel yourself swaying sort of.

V. Kane: What sort of an effect did it have on you?

Mr. Gill: Well, you'd be overcome if you was in it for too long, I couldn't hang about too long in it.

V. Kane: You'd black out you mean?

Mr. Gill: Yes.

V. Kane: Did that ever happen to you, Mr. Gill?

Mr. Gill: Well, on the very dizzy side if you like. A number of times not actually dragged away but swaying sort of, so I'd have to get the fresh air as soon as I could like.

Mr. Beer: The major problem was finding the proper seals for valves, so consequently if you were unable to find the proper seals, these valves used to leak vinyl chloride excessively.

V. Kane: How would you know that they were leaking?

Mr. Beer: We got showered with the vinyl chloride, all vinyl chloride on to you.

V. Kane: Showered on to you?

Mr. Beer: Yes, yes. The valves were overhead, chain operated valves and just by the simple process of opening or closing it, you just got showered with vinyl chloride unless you kept well out of the way.

V. Kane: And did this happen frequently?

Mr. Beer: Frequently, yes, yes, very very often.

Mr. Liddiard: Well, you could almost say continuously, very often the handles on the valves weren't too good and of course as you opened them there was a lot of it used to shoot down on top of you. Your clothes would go like frosted, you know, just like you see a white frost in the morning, your clothes would go like that.

V. Kane: Today things are much different. To clean the polymerisers in P.150 there is sophisticated equipment involving the use of water pressure and suction devices, though it's still necessary for the cleaner in protective clothing and on a safety harness to descend into the polymeriser to clean it. P.V.C. powder is produced in two forms - a paste which is a fine powder and a suspension, a larger and coarser grain for making tougher products like pipes and cables, both contain some V.C.M., up to fifty parts per million.

Report No. ICI.549Continuation No.7.

Monitoring of the atmosphere inside the plant has been meticulous since 1974, though the legal limit is ten parts per million, B.P.'s target is that of Europe, three parts per million. In America the legal limit is nought, zero parts per million. When V.C.M. in the atmosphere rises above the working limit an alarm sounds, in fact it sounded twice while we were filming. Does B.P. acknowledge that procedures followed and the tolerance of V.C.M. accepted before 1974 were dangerous.

Mr. Anthony Dunne: (Works Gen. Manager, B.P.Chem., Barry) The company accepts that at that stage conditions were such that in hindsight it can be seen could have caused some of the problems of V.C.M. which we are now experiencing today.

V. Kane: Does it accept any sort of responsibility in individual cases?

Mr. Dunne: Individuals have taken legal measures against the company, but these are still under review and it is very difficult and a very complicated situation to say whether or not we accept responsibility. What we do say is that we were not negligent during that period, we acted in the manner which the safety standards of the day dictated and we do not feel that there is any question of negligence at that stage..

V. Kane: But the fact that that expert advice proved to be wrong doesn't disturb the company?

Mr. Dunne: Of course it disturbs the company, but the company acknowledges that one can be very wise in hindsight. We're quite satisfied that at the time we did all that was possible, we called in all the experts that were available at that stage, it's only since then that the sum total of knowledge of V.C.M. and its particular properties has been investigated and announced to the world at large.

V. Kane: But are the men who worked in P.5. the wiser in hindsight? Healthy men now but living with the knowledge that they may in years to come contract diseases brought on simply by doing their job ten/fifteen years ago, for disease can beckon across the space of a decade and many who've long left the industry have succumbed. Reg Bractor* died a few weeks ago in June, 1980 of liver disease. He was a cleaner at P.5 for nine years until 1971.

Report No. IC1549Continuation No.8.

Mr. Roy Reeves: Well, in 1966 I was a Charging Operator and my chargehand in those particular days was a Mr. Sid Ball. He wasn't an old chap, I would say I'd put him in his early thirties at the time. He'd been ill off and on for some time and eventually he was taken into hospital and visited him there, like, you know, with various people and he died.

V. Kane: What of? ..

Mr. Reeves: Similar complaint to what I've got, that is non-cerebic** fibrosis of the liver.

V. Kane: While you were .. in the years you were working as a cleaner, you knew Mr. Wolfe didn't you?

Worker: I did, yes.

V. Kane: What was he doing with you?

Worker: The same job as I was doing, poly cleaning, exactly the same, no different. I used to take him to work and we'd do exactly the same work, we worked together, we used to work it, if one come out before the other he would go and check to see if you wanted a pull out, he wanted a pull out, you know, slurry on the bottom, you know, he had too much in there, we'd give one another a hand to pull it out and you know carry on along that line.

V. Kane: And in 1974 Mr. Wolfe died?

Worker: That's right.

V. Kane: Do you know what he died of?

Worker: Angiosarcoma.

V. Kane: That's liver cancer?

Worker: Liver cancer.

2nd Worker: My old mate, Mr. Killin*, I'd worked with him for quite a number of years and now he was about as healthy as you could wish for about twelve months ago and now he's dead with angiosarcoma.

3rd Worker: Well, I know for a fact now there's been two deaths. There has been four men who've been suspect of liver damage, whether or not more men will have the same problem I wouldn't like to say, it's only just proved now with this last death. The man had been retired seven years and his .. worked in an active job then suddenly it just caught up with him.

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Continuation No.9.

V. Kane: And Mr.Pearce* who I was supposed to meet today.

3rd Worker: Yes, Well, he's in rather a difficult case, they won't tell him precisely and this is his word to me, they won't tell him, the doctors won't tell him precisely what he has got.

V. Kane: And why isn't he here today?

3rd Worker: (Coughing) He's been pushed back into hospital. I'd arranged for him to come here today, I was going to pick him up and bring him over and then he's just recently, last week, come out of hospital and his wife rang me yesterday and I went over to see her and he's been taken back into hospital having the same problem again, haemorrhaging from his stomach.

(Film of funeral service)

V. Kane: We were never able to interview Gordon Pearce, he died a few weeks later in January this year, angiosarcoma, liver cancer. He was 48 and had once been a poly cleaner in P.S. Four men have died of angiosarcoma at Barry. Sid Ball died of cystic fibrosis in '65 when British Geon were the employers. They gave his widow a pension of two pounds seventeen shillings a week. Of the ten claims against B.P. who took over from British Geon two have been settled without prejudice. One man is still alive and the other dead. Of the remaining eight three are dead like Mr.Pearce and five still at work or retired.

It's the trade unions who've pressed the claims with varying degrees of force, it must be said. What do they say to the general view that today's knowledge was not available before 1974.

Mr. Jeff Thomas: (Solicitor, A.U.E.W.) It's increasingly becoming apparent to me that there was evidence that was being picked up internationally about the risks from this process, it was being picked up many years ago, and we're talking now in terms of two decades ago, and that this evidence was available and how far it was known I'm not able to say but it was available, it should have been known to companies, employers, to manufacturers on a large-scale who were involved in, we'll say, this sort of process.

V. Kane: And that includes big multi-national companies who operate all over the world

Mr. Thomas: They are prime examples of companies who should be up to date with research, who should be on top of any small indication of risks that appear from

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particular processes, particular projects, particular chemicals and unfortunately so many of these companies are concerned I could almost say exclusively with the profit motive rather than with the health and safety motive and the welfare of their employees.

V. Kane: What would your union say needs to be done about all this then, Mr. Gee?

Mr. David Gee: Well, firstly, Mr. Kane, that the levels of V.C. in the air has got to be reduced to the lowest detectable level with whatever the most sophisticated detecting instruments can come up with and that means at the moment a maximum of one part per million. The current standard in the U.K. is ten, that has got to be reduced. Secondly, we're saying that there ought to be independent surveys of our workers for all of these symptoms. We understand that nothing is really being done on the reproductive effects and we don't think that the other ... the strange symptoms that the Vinotex people got are being looked for either. Thirdly, we're saying that people who do pick up all of these diseases the old and the new, ought to be compensated without having to prove negligence both at the State level and from the company.

V. Kane: Knowledge of the implications of exposure to V.C.M. gas didn't strike the industry or the medical world as a blinding light in 1974, rather it was the falling into place of evidence that had been building up over the years. The alarm bells had been sounded.

Dr. Tim Carter: (Senior Medical Officer, B.P.Chem.) The process went on, the alarm bells were sounding because of the identification of this condition of atherosclerosis and in fact a more stringent hygiene standard was introduced at that time because of these new findings. I think it's easier to look at this with hindsight, but from the current knowledge available at the time it was felt that the degree of protection afforded by the new standard was adequate.

V. Kane: Was there not though suspicion, more than just that, from America and Russia, a Russian study about a cancer link, a liver cancer link in the '60s?

Dr. Carter: There were some studies from Russia which were not very well documented. I can't speak personally of just how much attention they received in the '60s, but they were kept under review, as I mentioned we studied liver function in our employees here and we found that no adverse effects. One can only go on the basis of the information available at the time.

Report No. ICI.549Continuation No.11.

V. Kane: But before 1968 you'd had one person who'd died of a liver condition here and another person who went down with it.

Dr. Carter: Yes, that's correct and I mentioned that we did a study of liver function in our employees at that time with expert academic advice and the conclusion was that there was not a consistent pattern of liver disease. Now with hindsight one might wish to review that finding, but at the time it was I think still a reasonable finding on the basis of the survey that was undertaken. The people who have developed tumours have essentially been those who've had periods of several years exposure at concentrations of several hundred parts per million.

V. Kane: So the way the company operates at the moment I take it that there's no possibility of such exposure?

Dr. Carter: There's no evidence of any excess risk at current levels.

V. Kane: Do you believe - is it your view then that it's unlikely that anybody would contract liver cancer now?

Dr. Carter: It's unlikely, but it's impossible to prove an absolute negative, safety is relative in all things.

V. Kane: The dangers of V.C.M. had been reported for thirty-six years before 1974. In 1938 V.C.M. was reported toxic to animals. From Russia in '49 liver damage to fifteen workers. In 1960 a disturbing report from Canada about V.C.M. poisoning. In '63 Rumania identified Raynaud's syndrome. Another report from Russia in '65, Raynaud's syndrome again in Belgium '66. The evidence grew throughout the '60s from many countries. In 1970 Vinyl chloride was reported to have caused cancer in rats. The next year further alarm from America, Canada and Russia and then in '72 an Italian, Dr. Maltoni*, found V.C.M. induced cancer in a rat. American scientists were sent to work with him and in 1974 he produced his report on liver cancer in rats which inhaled V.C.M. His finding was confirmed later after experiments with mice. In January of that year the Goodrich Company in Kentucky learnt that a worker had died of liver cancer, cross checking they found two others had died previously of the same rare condition. Then three more deaths were announced. They ran extensive blood tests on two hundred and seventy employees, fifty-five showed blood abnormalities.

Report No. ICI.549Continuation No.12.

Since the cancer link was proved what do the health authorities feel about the use of this highly toxic substance in manufacturing? In 1974 after the Goodrich revelation, it was suggested that there should be a worldwide ban on the use of V.C.M. Well, why not such a ban?

Dr. Alan Jones: (Senior Medical Officer, H.S.E) Well, if you go down that road and you consider that in 1974 we had I suppose less than a score of cases of liver cancer which is the thing which caused all the problem, if you ban a process on that kind of evidence then you would of course have to stop mining coal, you'd have to stop any sort of industrial agriculture, you'd have to stop all deep sea fishing, all those occupations and many times more dangerous to life than manufacturing vinyl chloride.

V. Kane: Is it a question of degree then, if it a question that you accept so much death or illness but no more?

Dr. Jones: That is not for the doctor or the Health and Safety Executive to answer, that is for the public to answer and I'm not ducking the question. I think it is a political decision, if you like, it's a social decision and for Parliament and our democratic representatives to answer after we've given them all the facts as dispassionately as we can, but to me the logic of the situation is as I have said, that if you ban something that causes thirty deaths internationally tragic though that may be, you've got to start thinking about other more dangerous industries and what you're going to do about them.

V. Kane: What do you say, finally, to the fact that a number of people working at that plant in the last ten/fifteen years have become ill and some of them have died? What about B.P.'s competence then?

Dr. Jones: These people were exposed to very high levels by modern standards of vinyl chloride vapour. At that time when I accept that B.P. could not have known the consequences.

V. Kane: There's been concern not only at what happens inside the plant, but what happens outside as well. When pressure builds up in the polymeriser these pipes form an escape route. In emergencies they discharge the contents of a threatened polymeriser into the atmosphere. It could be transferred to another chamber but

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Continuation No.13

that's expensive, so up into the sky it goes to descend in the form of a white powder to the chagrin of the residents of Sully. There's much argument about how often these discharges occur. Frequently, according to some.

Mr. Robert McDavitt: (Worker) You didn't do it, it's just that you had a bursting disc and there used to be on the average two hundred and ten pounds pressure and once the poly reached two hundred and ten pounds pressure that disc would burst and of course it would go up just like a whale spouting, miles up into the air. Well, I say go up just like ... miles but ...

Mr. Roy Barnes: A hundred feet up into the air and then you used to get drift over the plant and everything you see was covered in white.

V. Kane: How often did this happen?

Mr. McDavitt: Oh, on average once a week I should imagine.

V. Kane: So these discharges into the atmosphere, what's the most you can recall in your working experience?

Mr. Barnes: Well, there was .. we had trouble with the salt solution, we had to put in to stop the poly going solid and .. the gelatine we used to call it. We had a period there where we had about twenty-eight polys go through the roof in a period of about three days and we had a tremendous amount went solid.

V. Kane: In the twelve months to July '79 B.P. recorded two blow-outs from bursting disc failures and a hundred and five powder blow-outs ranging from the trivial to the serious.

Resident: I can't have my windows open and when the wind's in this direction we get a coating of it.

V. Kane: How often does that happen?

Resident: Well, up to July/August of this year it happened fourteen times.... it happened in '79, it happened fourteen times on B.P.'s own admission.

V. Kane: And before that?

Resident: Oh, it happened regularly, regularly.

V. Kane: Do you know when something's gone wrong?

Resident: If the wind's in this direction most certainly we know it ...

V. Kane: How much dust is there?

Resident: A lot of dust. It will coat the ground, it will coat .. if the car's outside it will coat the car and I have seen B.P.'s men washing the roads down with hoses.

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Continuation No.14

V. Kane: as thick as that?

Resident: As thick as that.

V. Kane: What do they say to you about the dust?

Resident: Oh, they're very sorry it's happened and if I will phone them up every time I have a complaint they will see what they can do about it, but unfortunately they don't do anything at all.

V. Kane: Have they ever told you how much dust there is?

Resident: Yes, Yes, the chap who came over and saw me, told me that every time that they get what we call a blow-out there's a ton of P.V.C. goes into the air which costs them a lot of money.

V. Kane: A ton?

Resident: A ton.

V. Kane: Have you had any contact with B.P. about all this?

Dr. Gwilym Rees: Yes, three times. We've had the shift chemists up there, they've taken samples and made reports to me and say it's non-toxic. They've offered to wash the car for me, but that isn't a practical proposition as far as I'm concerned, but they don't seem to be able to control these emissions. They do say that these are breakdowns or failures in the plant that happen from time to time.

V. Kane: Back to you, Mr.McDavitt, have they said anything to you about the safety or otherwise of this dust, this powder?

Mr. McDavitt: Well, they told me that it was non-toxic and the chap who came over here offered to eat a tablespoonful of it in front of me, when I suggested he went and got it and did so he didn't do it.

V. Kane: Are you worried about the dust, the P.V.C. dust which is discharged apparently frequently into the atmosphere?

Mr. Gary Gane: Well, I think it could be true to say it is a matter of concern, particularly because the properties, the physiological properties of P.V.C. dust have not been thoroughly examined as yet and this could be a potential hazard, I'll put it no stronger than that.

V. Kane: You feel it is yourself do you?

Mr. Gane: Oh, it's a nuisance over people's cars and so on and the window sills get covered in this white film of dust ...

V. Kane: And that is a frequent occurrence?

Mr. Gane: Well, it's an occurrence, how frequent it is I don't know.

V. Kane: And when did you last see it?

Mr. Gane: I last saw it on Sunday, last Sunday on the road.

V. Kane: A big expansion of B.P. is almost complete. The new plant should be ready this autumn. Its capacity will be eighty thousand gallons. Safety and trade union representatives of the four hundred contractors' men who've been building P.V.C.2. say they've had difficulties with sickness, vomiting, sore throats and eyes, they've been sent off the site twice and once because of a V.C.M. emission. Since Monday there have been seven stoppages, the latest this morning. In P.V.C.3. - mechanisation is much advanced, especially the cleaning procedures and extra safeguards against blow-outs are built into the computerised controlroom. But there will still be the capacity to discharge to atmosphere and the quantity discharged could be much greater than now, twenty times greater. Perhaps because of the protests -- (fault on tape) ... a mile from the works. One monitoring V.C.M. gas and other the powder, the machines are nowhere near the houses.

Mr. Gane: (Environmental Health Officer, Glamorgan) ... express the doubts V.C.M. emissions from the works, local residents expressed some concern. It is a toxic product in large concentrations and we want to assure the residents here that they're being ... that the levels that they're being exposed to around here are in no way harmful.

V. Kane: Might it not have made more sense to put it right among the houses?

Mr. Gane: I think not, as I said we took advice from the government laboratory involved in the production of this and they were happy with the site.

V. Kane: And the results that you've had from this so far?

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Continuation No.16

Mr. Gane: The results .. It's only been operating a matter of two months or so and the results are no serious levels and give no cause for concern I would say.

V. Kane: But is the fact of the matter not that you've put this here because of a planned expansion at B.P?

Mr. Gane: Yes, I think it's fair to say that, yes. We are aware, as you are no doubt aware, that there is a planned expansion at the works that is going to increase production of vinyl ... P.V.C. by about 50% and obviously by placing this here now we will be able to monitor levels of V.C.M. prior to the production expansion and obviously afterwards we will be able to assess them if there is any increase in pollution from there.

V. Kane: B.P's expansion is almost complete. Another extension, that of Sully village is underway. The intention is to double the size of Sully, at present six hundred houses and two thousand people and demand is such that most of the houses are sold before they're completed. Planning permission for the development was given by Mr. John Morris when he was Secretary for Wales and the curious thing is that in granting planning permission he over-ruled objection by the Health and Safety Executive. The Executive's report referred to the risks of toxicity and explosion in the area, but permission was given. The extension of Sully is proceeding and the Health and Safety Executive presumably no longer oppose. What was the basis of their objections to the scheme at the time that planning permission was granted?

Mr. John Lippiard: (Principal Factory Inspector, H.S.E) Every situation where we have bulk storage of, for example, highly flammable or explosive materials my Department is obviously interested from the point of view of the way these are controlled. Our general policy is that in circumstances where we have such bulk storage that we should try if possible to minimise the possible risks, whatever it may be, of exposure to those materials, because if anything should go wrong

V. Kane: But the bigger the plant the bigger the risk.

Mr. Lippiard: Often the bigger the plant the better the control, it doesn't necessarily follow the bigger the plant the bigger the risk.

V. Kane: But what was the particular objection then four years ago?

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Continuation No.17.

Mr. Lippiard: Basically by saying that we had bulk storage of particular materials in this place and therefore we say after having carefully considered all the circumstances involved, that we would .. we feel in general that it might be best to ensure that we didn't increase the numbers of people, for example, living near B.P.

V. Kane: The Health and Safety Executive keeps a close and constant watch on the manufacturing process at B.P. On 12th November, '79 for instance, it wrote asking for twenty-five safety improvements to be implemented in two departments. This was followed by another letter a week later asking for another thirty-one improvements. There is concern at the moment about another toxic substance, lead which is used as a sort of catalyst in the P.V.C. process in the compounding area. The danger of working with lead is that it can lead to blood conditions and only this summer the Executive wrote expressing concern that the blood lead counts of some workers were higher than they should be. After blood tests two men had been taken off work by the Works Doctor. One man who once worked at the compound plant at B.P. died of a blood disease two years ago. He was Kenneth Ball who spent twenty-five years working in the chemicals industry at Barry. The last ten of the years in the compound department.

Mrs. Gladys Ball: Oh yes, it was full of dust, he told me. Oh, he was black just like a chimney sweep would be.

V. Kane: Did he ever tell you about other men being taken ill?

Mrs. Ball: Oh yes, there was a lot of men taken ill inside his building.

V. Kane: Do you know of men being seriously ill?

Mrs. Ball: Oh yes, three died.

V. Kane: Did you ever hear him complain about being ill himself?

Mrs. Ball: Oh yes - if sometimes .. they'd take his blood, you see, and perhaps his lead is up, the lead count was up, he'd feel ill then, vomiting, that's what he used to do, vomit but he'd only vomited the five months before he died.

V. Kane: Mrs. Ball doesn't have the support of her husband's trade union in her efforts to win compensation for his death. In a letter from the union, the Transport and General Workers, she was told that an eminent consultant physician was of the opinion that her husband's former employment in no way attributed to his death.

According to the Death Certificate he died of advanced lymphoma, a consultant

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pathologist told us this was a malignant disease similar to leukaemia. He went on to say, there's a higher incidence of this type of lymphoma among chemical workers than in the general public. He also said - surveys show 15% more cancer is related to occupational exposure. Would Ken Ball be alive if he hadn't worked twenty-five years in the chemical industry? Can we ever be certain of anything in that industry? After all it took thirty years to learn the truth about V.C.M., who knows if even now we have only half the truth?

Should the law protect workers from risks which we have not yet recognised? B.P. tests its plastics products rigorously, can they be as sure of their workers?

Are you saying that we need to change the law in this country about all this?

Mr. David Gee: Basically, yes, we do need regulations that govern carcinogen, that have built into them this new approach to substances, that puts a greater weight on evidence other than human evidence and also evaluates it at a lower level of proof if you like. The problem is that the scientists say you must have proof beyond all reasonable doubt, that's very difficult to achieve, you've going to waste a lot of human beings if you're going to reach that high level of proof. We say that the scientific notion of beyond all reasonable doubt should be lowered or removed and this balance of probabilities idea put in its place, which is a lower level of proof.

V. Kane: So the take-up rate when there is danger is very slow as far as industry's concerned?

Mr. Gee: It is, it fits into a general pattern of waiting till you can count a rather large number of bodies really before companies and the government says - yes, there's a problem. If, for example, we'd picked up the early signs of V.C. disease, the liver damage that the Russians picked up in 1949. The A.O.L. bone disease in 1963 that the Rumanians picked up. The cancer in rats in 1970, four years before anybody moved because we hadn't before 1974 a dead worker. If any of these things are picked up earlier, in other words evidence from short-term tests, you've got a chemical test and it comes up positive and you say that's likely to be carcinogenic, if then that's added to positive evidence from animal data that's enough for us.

...oo0oo...

* denotes phonetic spelling

** denotes indistinct word

VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT ON LBC 'REPORTS' 29.7.80. NOON.
AS FOLLOWS:

ANNOUNCER: THE ASSOCIATION OF SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND MANAGERIAL STAFF, WARNS THAT THE PLASTIC BASE INGREDIENT -4.6) 2F VINYL CHLORIDE MONOMER COULD CAUSE CANCER. VCM IS USED IN COUNTLESS EVERYDAY ITEMS FROM FURNITURE TO RECORDS AND PLASTIC CONTAINERS. RESEARCH INDICATES THAT IT MAY BE RESPONSIBLE FOR CERTAIN TYPES OF CANCER PREVALENT AMONG PEOPLE WHO WORK IN THE PLASTICS INDUSTRY. ASTMS REPRESENTATIVE ROGER LYONS SAYS THE UNION WILL NOT TOLERATE CONTINUED EXPOSURE TO SUCH A HAZARD AND IS PREPARED TO WAGER A SAFETY CAMPAIGN.

MR. LYONS: OUR MEMBERS WHO WORK IN THE PLASTIC MATERIALS PLANTS HAVE BEEN INCREASINGLY CONCERNED AT THE HEALTH HAZARDS THEY FACE. WE BELIEVE THAT THE RESEARCH WE HAVE PUT TOGETHER FROM INFORMATION FROM THIS COUNTRY AND OTHER COUNTRIES INDICATES THAT THEIR OWN EMPLOYERS HAVE NEVER ADEQUATELY PROTECTED THE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH OF THE EMPLOYEES CONCERNED. IN OUR REPORT WE INDICATE HOW HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARDS ARE NOW MUCH TOUGHER IN OTHER COUNTRIES AND HOW KEY RESEARCH IN THE PAST HAS BEEN IGNORED. MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL THE NEED TODAY IN BRITAIN FOR MUCH TIGHTER SAFETY CONTROLS WHICH IN THE IMMEDIATE TERM WE BELIEVE

XXXX

WILL PROTECT THE JOB SECURITY AND THE HEALTH OF THE WORKERS CONCERNED. SECONDLY WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE BETTER COMPENSATION FOR THOSE WHO HISTORICALLY ARE NOW SUFFERING FROM ANGIOSARCOMA AND CANCER OF THE LIVER, THE RESULT OF WORKING UNPROTECTED IN PLASTIC PLANTS.

INTERVIEWER: HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE AFFECTED IN THIS WAY?

MR. LYONS: ABOUT THE THOUSAND CURRENTLY AT WORK AND SEVERAL THOUSAND WHO HAVE WORKED OVER THE YEARS. MANY OF WHO HAVE BEEN INVALIDED OUT BELOW THE AGE WITH LOW PENSIONS WITH GREAT DIFFICULTY IN FINDING OTHER WORK. ONE EXAMPLE IS ONE FOREMAN AT THE ICI PLASTICS DIVISION PLANT WHO WAS RETIRED SICK IN 1972 AND ONLY IN OCTOBER 1979 ON HIS DEATHBED DID ICI ADMIT LIABILITY AND AGREE TO PAY COMPENSATION.

*Innocent! L. Hill
Random? B. Hill*

MR. LYONS: WE NOW HAVE SOPHISTICATED COMPUTER EQUIPMENT THAT CAN SAFEGUARD THE LIVES OF CURRENT WORKERS IN A MUCH MORE VIGOROUS WAY AND WE WANT THE SAFETY STANDARDS BROUGHT TO THE ABSOLUTE BEST AVAILABLE, NOT TO THE MOST REASONABLE STANDARDS THAT THE EMPLOYERS SAY, BUT THE BEST AVAILABLE AND CONTROLLABLE STANDARDS.

INTERVIEWER: WHY HAVE WE NOT SEEN A CAMPAIGN LIKE THIS LAUNCHED BEFORE?

MR. LYONS: WELL, THERE HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLE RESEARCH AMONGST THE EMPLOYERS CONCERNED BECAUSE, AS YOU UNDERSTAND, THEY ARE WORRIED ABOUT THEIR OWN JOB SECURITY AND WE HAVE GIVEN THE COMPANIES CONCERNED AN OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE THE STANDARDS TO THE BEST POSSIBLE STANDARDS AS OPERATED ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD. BUT UNFORTUNATELY THEY HAVE FAILED TO MOVE AS FAST AS WE WOULD LIKE - AN EEC DIRECTIVE HAS IN FACT TO AN EXTENT SLOWED THINGS DOWN. WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE SAME ON MILLIONTH PART STANDARD THAT THEY HAVE IN THE UNITED STATES, THE KIND OF VIGOROUS CONTROLS THEY HAVE IN SWEDEN AND MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL MUCH BETTER COMPENSATION FOR THOSE PEOPLE WHO ARE SUFFERING, WHOSE FAMILIES ARE SUFFERING AND WHO WILL DIE OVER THE COMING MONTHS AND YEARS BECAUSE THEY'VE WORKED FOR THESE MAJOR PLASTIC MULTI-NATIONALS.

INTERVIEWER: SO FAR WE HAVE TALKED ABOUT THE DANGERS TO PEOPLE IN THE INDUSTRY. WHAT ABOUT CONSUMERS? AS YOU DESCRIBED THE USE OF VCM THEY ARE IN THINGS THAT WE HANDLE EVERY DAY. ARE WE IN ANY DANGER IF WE DRINK FROM A

PLASTIC CONTAINER?

MR. LYONS: FIRST, LET ME SAY THAT THE ASTMS BELIEVES THAT

THE PLASTIC MATERIALS INDUSTRY IS A KEY INDUSTRY, DOWNSTREAM FROM NORTH SEA OIL AND GAS AND WE MUST MAINTAIN IT. WHAT WE DO TO DO IS MAINTAIN IT AND DEVELOP PRODUCTS BASED ON IT WHICH ARE SAFE FOR ALL CONCERNED.

87171 MONSER G
87171 MONSER GD

FROM D M PARKER P R ICI LDN MILLBANK

IMPERIAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES LIMITED
PLASTICS DIVISION-WELWYN GARDEN CITY

From: J STAFFORD
Division Manager
Health & Environment Protection
DSO-16
Ext J162/3859/2096
3859 - Dr Stafford's Sec
2096 - Telephone contact in 73

To:

Dr F W Best
Dr D M Ferguson
Mr D Ryerson
Mr M J S Gibbons
Dr J G Kammuller
Mr J C Thomas
Dr T Garlanda
Dr J P Tassignon
Mr P G Claus
Mr J Lawrence
Mr J Seavell
Dr T R Torkelson
File

VCM - ASTMS

You may care to see a cutting from the Evening Gazette, a paper put out in the locality of our Hillhouse PVC plant. The reporter has got a number of things wrong eg Mr Rigby had ASL, not a lung tumour.

For gross inaccuracies, innuendo etc the enclosed BBC4 transcript is the best yet. This programme was done locally in Wales near the BP factory about which there was a BBC TV Wales programme on 11 July and the interviewer there was the same Mr V Kane.

Plastics & Rubber Weekly have gone to the root of the matter - I don't think our Government and the other unions will necessarily welcome the resuscitation of the Tripartite Working Party.

The Daily Star is a communist newspaper.

J Stafford

JS/SEW/DSO-16
1 August 1980

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Dr S.B.H.K.

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PLEASE PASS FOR THE URGENT ATTENTION OF MISS VIVIANNE CURRELL
VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT OF ITEM ON BBC RADIO 4 - WALES
'MEET FOR LUNCH' 12.30.P.M. 30/7/80

VINCENT KANE: A REPORT IS PUBLISHED TODAY BY THE WHITE COLLAR UNION ASTMS WHICH IS SHARPLY CRITICAL OF CERTAIN PRACTICES IN THE PVC INDUSTRY, THAT INCLUDES BP AND ICI, PARTICULARLY BP CHEMICALS HERE AT BARRY, SOUTH WALES.

VCM - VINYL CHLORIDE MONOMER - IS THE GAS WHICH IS USED IN THE PRODUCTION OF PVC AND IT HAS BEEN PROVED CONCLUSIVELY FIVE OR SIX YEARS AGO THAT EXPOSURE TO THAT GAS - VCM GAS - CAN CAUSE CANCER. THREE MEN HAVE DIED AT BARRY AS A RESULT OF THEIR EXPOSURE BEFORE 1974 TO THIS POISONOUS GAS. BUT THE UNION IS NOW SAYING THEY ARE HAVING GREAT DIFFICULTY, PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN AFFECTED, IN GETTING COMPENSATION FROM THE COMPANIES CONCERNED. ROGER LYONS IS THE SPOKESMAN FOR ASTMS TODAY.

MR. LYONS: WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONS AND DISEASES WHICH THIS GAS, VCM, CAN CAUSE?

MR. ROGER LYONS: THE FIRST PROBLEM CAUSED IS A SPECIAL DISEASE CALLED ACROSCLEROSIS WHICH AFFECTS THE HANDS - IS A STIFFENING AND BROADENING OF THE HANDS. THIS IS NOW AN INDUSTRIAL DISEASE FOR WHICH YOU CAN GET STATE COMPENSATION. THERE IS ALSO A DISEASE CALLED VC DISEASE WHICH RECENTLY STRUCK WORKERS AT THE VINYL TESTING PLANT AT CHESTERFIELD WHO WERE AWARDED A TOTAL OF THREE-QUARTERS OF A MILLION POUNDS DAMAGES AT A SHEFFIELD COURT. THIS IS A VC DISEASE AND A NUMBER OF PEOPLE HAVE THIS WHICH INCLUDES LIVER DISEASE. HOWEVER THE WORST ONE OF ALL IS AN ANGIO SARCOMA WHICH IS A FORM OF LIVER CANCER CAUSED BY VCM AND THERE APPEARS TO BE NOW IN EXCESS OF ONE HUNDRED DEATHS. AT BP CHEMICALS BARRY PLANT THREE MEN HAVE DIED OF THIS AS LIVER CANCER IN THE LAST EIGHT MONTHS ALONE.

*House 1945
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13???*

V.KANE: THESE ARE MEN WHO WERE EXPOSED TO VCM AS LONG AGO AS TEN/FIFTEEN YEARS?

MR. LYONS: TBA THAT IS CORRECT. IN 1974 INFORMATION WHICH THE EMPLOYERS NO MEDICAL ADVISERS HAD FOR SOME YEARS PREVIOUSLY WAS FINALLY EXPOSED AND BROUGHT INTO THE OPEN FOLLOWING A LONG COURT CASE BY A MAN AT GOODRICH VCM PLANT IN AMERICA. WHEN HE FINALLY WON HIS CASE THE AMERICAN EMPLOYERS ADMITTED THAT THE EUROPEAN COMPANIES, INCLUDING ICI AND BP, HAD BEEN UNDERTAKING RESEARCH IN ITALY AND THE PROFESSOR IN ITALY HAD SHOWN THE INCIDENCE OF CANCER IN LABORATORY EXPERIMENTS.

*Affiliate
insurance!
End lines
again*

V. KANE: IS IT TRUE, MR. LYONS, THAT MEN WHO WERE EMPLOYED AT VCM PLANTS AND WERE USED AS CLEANERS IN PARTICULAR CONTEXTS WERE ESPECIALLY AT RISK?

R&S 113179

MR. LYONS: ANYONE WHO WAS INVOLVED IN, SAY, AT THE VATS WHICH PARTICULARLY INVOLVED CLEARING THE VATS AFTER EACH BATCH OF PRODUCTION, THEY WERE TRADITIONALLY MOST AT RISK BECAUSE OF THE RELEASE OF VCM GAS WHILE THEY WERE INVOLVED IN CLEANING.

V. KANE: AND IT MAY BE MEN WHO WERE INVOLVED IN CLEANING - THESE POLYMERISERS TEN/FIFTEEN YEARS AGO MAY YET SHOW SYMPTOMS?

MR. LYONS: THIS IS BECAUSE OF THE GESTATION PERIOD OF ABOUT TEN TO TWENTY YEARS FOR LIVER CANCER TO COME TO THE SURFACE AND THEREFORE PEOPLE EXPOSED TO THE HIGH LEVEL OF CONCENTRATED GAS BEFORE 1974 WILL NOW BE BEGINNING TO FALL SICK. THIS IS HAPPENING AND SOME PEOPLE'S SICKNESS HAS DEVELOPED EARLY AND IT'S TAKING SOME TIME FOR THEM TO DIE: FOR EXAMPLE, AT AN ICI PLANT AT HILLHOUSE A WORKER, FOREMAN, FELL SICK IN 1972 BUT THE COMPANY DID NOT AGREE COMPENSATION THEN BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T THINK HIS ILLNESS WAS DUE TO VCM. HE FINALLY DIED IN OCTOBER '79, SEVEN YEARS LATER AND HE'D HAD TO WORK AS A SECURITY MAN IN THE MEANTIME AND ICI CACTUALLY APPROACHED HIM ON HIS DEATHBED IN OCTOBER '79 OFFERING HIM COMPENSATION WHICH HE SIGNED FOR, WHICH PREVENTED ACTION BEING TAKEN IN THE COURTS. THIS SEVEN YEAR PERIOD FROM SICKNESS BEING DIAGNOSED TO DEATH IS THE KIND OF PROBLEM WE ARE SAYING MUST INVOLVE IMMEDIATE ACTION BY BP AND ICI IN AGREEING BENEFIT TERMS, SO THAT THE ILLNESS WHICH MAY COME IS NOT IN FACT COMING BEFORE THE MAN IS ALLOWED TO LEAVE WORK. AT THE MOMENT HE IS ALLOWED TO LEAVE WORK WHEN HIS SICKNEZS IS DIAGNOSED AND WE SAY THAT IS TOO LATE.

little
abnormal

Shadows
movement

BV.KANE: IS IT NOT TRUE THA T BP DENIES LIABILITY, DENIES NEGLIGENCE, BECAUSE THEY SAY THEY ACTED ON ALL KNOWN INFORMATION AT THE TIME?

MR. LYONS: WE DON'T BELIEVE THAT THEY DID. THE INFORMATION - DETAILED RESEARCH - WAS PUBLISHED IN MEDICAL JOURNALS IN 1949, BASED ON RESEARCH IN THE SOVIET UNION WHICH SHOWED A DIRECT LINK BETWEEN WORKERS IN VCM AND DISEASE. THIS WAS FOLLOWED UP IN SUBSEQUENT MEDICAL JOURNALS AND FINALLY IN RUMANIA IN 1963 DETAILED RESEARCH WAS PUBLISHED WHICH IN FACT A BP MEDICAL OFFICER - I BELIEVE - TRANSLATED IN 1968 FROM FRENCH WHICH THE RUMANIAN WORK WAS PUBLISHED IN, INTO ENGLISH. SO AS EARLY AS '68 BP CHEMICALS IN SOUTH WALES MUST HAVE KNOWN THAT THE EARLIER RUMANIAN RESEARCH OF '63 LINKED VCM WITH DISEASE.

Read
TRICKY!
not VCM?
not cancer

entire?

V. KANE: YOU SPOKE OF V C DISEASE APART FROM LIVER CANCER. IS THIS THE CONDITION THAT INCLUDES LOSS OF VIRILITY, FOR INSTANCE, AND CAN AFFECT THE WIVES OF WORKERS AS WELL?

MR. LYONS: THIS I UNDERSTAND FFROM MEDICAL ADVISERS IS INVOLVED. IT IS ONE OF THE FEATURES WHICH WOULD OBVIOUSLY NOT AFFECT EVERYONE CONCERNED AND I WOULDN'T WANT PEOPLE TO BE TERRIFIED BY THIS BUT IT'S CERTAINLY KNOWN TO HAPPEN AND FOR EXAMPLE AT CHESTERFIELD THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF CASES CONFIRMED BY MEDICAL ADVISERS OF IMPOTENCE CAUSED BY VC DISEASE.

What medical
advice?

independently

V.KANE: AND GENETIC EFFECTS ON CHILDREN BORN?

MR. LYONS: THIS IS A FEAR THAT IS BEING INVESTIGATED. I COULDN'T - NOT BEING A MEDICAL EXPERT - WOULD NOT WANT TO COMMENT DIRECTLY BUT THIS IS PART OF THE PROBLEM, THE LATEST INFORMATION WHICH WE DISCLOSED YESTERDAY FROM PROFESSOR MALLONI++ WHO HAS BEEN UNDER CONTRACT TO ICI AND BP, AMONG OTHER COMPANIES, HE REVEALED RECENTLY TO THE CURIE FOUNDATION AT A SEMINAR IN PARIS THAT THESE DISEASES COULD BE CAUSED BY VERY LOW DOSES, VERY LOW LEVELS OF EXPOSURE AND IT APPEARS FROM THIS LATEST RESEARCH THAT BRAIN TUMOURS AND OTHER DISEASES WHICH HADN'T PREVIOUSLY BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH VCM COULD NOW BE CAUSED BY VC EXPOSURE.

What
unusual!

Monism

V.KANE: COULD THIS MEANT MR. LYONS THAT THE TRADE UNIONS-ANYWAY

R&S 113180

V. KANE: COULD THIS MEAN, MR. LYONS, THAT THE TRADE UNIONS ANYWAY MIGHT BEGIN TO WONDER ABOUT BANNING THIS ALTOGETHER? IT'S A GIANT INDUSTRY IS IT NOT?

MR. LYONS: NO, WE WOULD NOT WANT TO BAN THE PRODUCTION OF VCM. WHAT WE WANT IS THE MAXIMUM HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARDS POSSIBLE. SWEDEN IMPOSED A ONE PART PER MILLION STANDARD AND THEY TOLD THE COMPANIES THEY HAD TO MATCH IT. I RECALL BACK IN THE MID SEVENTIES WHEN THE FIRST INFORMATION BECAME AVAILABLE BOTH BP AND ICI SAID IF THE TEN PPM STANDARD WAS INSISTED UPON WITHIN TWELVE MONTHS THEN THE PLANTS WOULD SHUT, A QUARTER OF A MILLION WORKERS WOULD BE THROWN OUT OF WORK. THE AMERICAN INDUSTRY SAID AT THE SAME TIME IF THIS WAS INSISTED UPON IT WOULD COST NINETY BILLION DOLLARS AND WOULD THROW TWO POINT TWO MILLION WORKERS OUT OF WORK. WELL, IN THIS COUNTRY IN FACT THEY BROUGHT IN THE TEN PPM IN 1976, THE AMERICANS DID SIMILAR THEN AND NO-ONE LOST THEIR JOB AND NO PLANTS WERE CLOSED DOWN AND WE BELIEVE TODAY WE COULD IMPOSE A ONE PART PER MILLION STANDARD HERE AS THEY HAVE IN THE UNITED STATES AND SWEDEN AND WE FEEL IT IS WRONG THAT ONLY BRAND NEW PLANTS ARE ANYWHERE NEAR THIS STANDARD AND ALSO WE BELIEVE THE CLEANING WORK INSIDE THE VATS WHICH IS, AS YOU SAID, THE MOST DANGEROUS AREA OF EXPOSURE, SHOULD BE AUTOMATED, AFTER ALL, BP DON'T SEND MEN THROUGH THEIR PIPELINES IN THE NORTH SEA, THEY SEND AUTOMATIC CLEANING MACHINES CONTROLLED BY MICRO CHIPS. *Did we?*

V. KANE: AND THE LAST QUESTION MR. LYONS, WHAT ABOUT COMPENSATION THEN FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE ILL NOW AND FOR PEOPLE WHO WILL FIND OUT IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS THAT THEY ARE ILL?

MR. LYONS: WELL, ASTMS IS INVOLVED IN LEGAL ACTION AGAINST BP CHEMICALS FOR ONE OF OUR MEMBERS IN BARRY. IT HAS COST US TENS OF THOUSANDS OF POUNDS AND IT IS QUITE WRONG FOR US TO JUST SORT OF FEED THE LAWYERS AND KEEP THE LEGAL INDUSTRY GRINDING ALONG WHEN IN FACT THE COMPANY KNOW FULL WELL THAT VC EXPOSURE CAUSED THE DISEASE CONCERNED AND WE WANT THE PROPER COMPENSATION PAYMENTS FOR THOSE EXPOSED TO HIGH LEVELS OF GAS IN PRE '74 YEARS. WE WANT THE RIGHT OF EARLY RETIREMENT WITHOUT ANY LOSS OF PAY OR PENSION FOR THE PEOPLE CONCERNED. THAT'S WHAT WE'RE SEEKING FROM BP AND ICI. WE'VE ASKED THEM IN WRITING FOR THIS, WE'VE TOLD THE EMPLOYERS NATIONALLY, WE'VE GOT THE BACKING OF THE WORKFORCE, AND I THINK BP AND ICI WILL HAVE TO COME CLEAN WITH BOTH THEIR WORKERS AND THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE AND AGREE TO A PROPER SYSTEM OF NOT JUST CONTROL OF THE MANUFACTURE TODAY AND TOMORROW BUT A PROPER AND ADEQUATE COMPENSATION FOR THOSE WHO HAVE GIVEN THE BEST PART OF THEIR LIVES LITERALLY IN VC PRODUCTION. *X have they?*

V. KANE: WELL, THAT'S ROGER LYONS AND HE IS THE SPOKESMAN FOR THE TRADE UNION ASTMS WHICH HAS PRODUCED THAT REPORT

++ DENOTES PHONETIC SPELLING

SENT 1225/31/7/80 JFP

FOR MR C LEWIS PR PLASTICS

MR OWEN JONES WORKS MANAGER PLASTICS HILLHOUSE

R&S 113181

West Lancashire Evening Gazette

WEDNESDAY, JULY 26, 1989

GENERAL TEL BLACKPOOL 23211

CLASSIFIED ADS TEL BLACKPOOL 23451

Sheila
Lancaster

Plant denies hurry over pay-off

ICI IN DEATHBED DEAL, SAYS UNION



CLAIMS that a deathbed cash deal was worked out between ICI officials and a retired worker dying of a rare lung disease, he had contracted while working at the Thornton chemical complex, are made in a report published by Britain's scientists' union, the ASTME.

But the widow of Mr. Jack Rigby, who died on October last year, says that the section of the report which deals with her husband's death is "a gross over-exaggeration."

"The report makes it look as if ICI were trying to pull the wool over his eyes. That's

what the thing has been. I am upset about it," said Mrs Dorothy Rigby, of Royal Avenue, Fleetwood.

ICI described the deathbed deal referred to as "absolute nonsense."

The report, drawn up by the Health and Safety Commission, the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs, refers to the incident on Mr Rigby, told at Blackpool, where an ICI doctor told the coroner that the company recognised the link between the liver disease, angiodysplasia, and the chemical vinyl chloride monomer, with which Mr Rigby had come into regular contact.

The report added: "ICI admitted liability during Mr Rigby's lifetime and offered compensation at the inquest. What was not

stated at the inquest was that the settlement was hammered out over Mr Rigby's deathbed."

Mrs Rigby commented: "The compensation agreement was made when he was at home before he

became really ill. He was fully aware of what was going on."

"The report makes it look as if Jack didn't know what he was doing when he signed the compensation agreement. I can only say that ICI have been very good to me," she said.

Mrs Rigby did not wish to discuss the details of the compensation agreement reached between ICI officials and her husband before his death.

Mr Rigby, who was 56 when he died, had worked at ICI for 18 years. He retired from the company on an early retirement scheme in 1972. He worked as a security officer at Fleetwood Dock for six years before becoming ill.

The report states that "diagnostically low health and safety standards" exist in the UK chemical industry, and demands better health protection and better compensation deals for workers whose health has been affected by the VCM chemicals.

"We will not tolerate our members being treated as hostages to fortune any longer. Too many families have now suffered personal tragedies," says ASTME national chemical officer Mr Roger Lyons. In the introduction to the report, the union says that there is "scientific evidence pointing

the link between VCM and cancer, liver, nervous system and genetic diseases and other complaints."

The report also claims that research information from Russian and East German scientists, as well as the results of British research in the connection between VCM and health problems, have been hushed up.

A union spokesman said Thornton ICI said Mr Rigby's case was the first to be officially recognised by ICI. Since his death, another worker had had to retire from the company after contracting a similar complaint after working with VCM chemicals.

The worker had requested an apology and was told by ICI that his VCM compensation agreement, drawn up after Mr Rigby's death, had helped

statement of the ASTME vinyl chloride monomer document.

The CIA has today received a copy of VCM prepared by ASTME.

The report really appears to bring together a collection of well known published literature and additional new to the discussion which have been tabling place since 1974 between Government, the TUC and industry.

Given the close discussion and the exchange of information which has taken place between these bodies in improving standards in the industry, we are surprised that ASTME now the need for an concerted updating of this kind.

The CIA is concerned at the errors and misleading information contained in the ASTME document; for example, the report totally fails to recognise the leading role played by the European industry in identifying the problem; it omits to mention the fact that the leading role played by the European industry in identifying the problem; it omits to mention the fact that the leading role played by the European industry in identifying the problem.

Advised

UK industry has carried out the necessary improvements to attain the best possible standards in its coverage and all UK companies concerned are fully complying with the new stringent standards set by the EEC.

Comparing like with like, the safety performance in UK factories matches the best international practice.

The CIA hopes that ASTME will now see fit to raise these matters within the framework of the long-standing joint consultation machinery on health and safety in the chemical industry.

ICI spokesman, Dr David Parker, described the report's deathbed deal reference as "absolute nonsense."

"It is not only over-dramatising what happened, it is just not true," he said.

Dr Parker said that there has been long negotiations between union solicitors acting for Mr Rigby and ICI after his illness had been diagnosed. The union solicitors had advised Mr Rigby to accept the company's compensation offer which he had done.

R&S 113182

Surprise ASTMS call for rethink on VCM findings

ONE of the biggest unions in the plastics industry wants to revive the special working party set up five years ago to investigate the cancer-related effects of vinyl chloride monomer.

The Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs is producing a new report on VCM and health and safety in the plastics industry.

ASTMS leaders are calling for lower threshold levels and compensation for those believed to have been exposed to the

monomer before new rules were drawn up by the working party.

ASTMS was not represented on the original working party, which drew its membership from the industry, trade unions and the Government.

The union had reservations about the scope of the recommendations made by the working party. ASTMS claims to have new arguments warranting re-examination of the situation.

The ASTMS report refers to the inadequate health and safety

standards of past years and insists that even more stringent rules are applied to safeguard workers.

The ASTMS campaign has come as a surprise. The working party's original action was thought to have the full support of trade unions, industry and the Government.

Many feel there are no grounds for independent action or criticism as the situation is under constant surveillance by the Health and Safety Commission.

Wednesday July 30 1980

DAILY STAR, Wednesday, July 30, 1980

The plastic passion killer

By PETER WELBOURN

THE COMMON household plastic PVC can be a passion killer to the men who make it.

It causes impotence, deformity and, in some cases, death according to a union report on the chemical.

Now the Association of

Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staff is calling for stricter controls in the PVC factories and better compensation for affected workers.

Sheila McKechnie, ASTMS's health and safety officer, said yesterday: "At least 18 have died from cancer and thousands suffered other

effects from making the stuff.

"It certainly causes impotence. Men talk about it among themselves on the shop floor but are too embarrassed to discuss it officially. We want them to come forward in confidence so we can assess the extent of the problem."

9,000 may be at risk from making plastic

By BILL WAINWRIGHT

AT LEAST 9,000 in the petrochemical industry may be at risk from exposure to vinyl chloride monomer used in making plastics.

The claim is made by the staff union ASTMS in a report which reviews research into the chemical and calls for stronger safety regulations and a compensation scheme.

Presenting the report yesterday, ASTMS national officer Roger Lyons said that until recently workers in the industry had tended to shrug off warnings from the union.

But now that workers were dying of cancer — there were three deaths at one plant in eight months — and it was known that the chemical gas — VCM as it is known — could cause other serious and lethal diseases of the liver, the "strong man" attitude had disappeared.

There was now widespread fear of who would be next, and what would happen to the families of those who might fall in future to a fatal or a crippling illness, Mr. Lyons said.

Among the effects of exposure to the gas listed in the report is a package of illnesses called VCM disease — which includes clubbed fingers and toes, poor circulation, breathing difficulties and sexual impotence.

The report also says that exposure to the gas has damaging effects on the foetus.

The alarming feature of these effects is that they are now known to be associated with long term exposure to low levels of the gas at or around the current amounts permitted in Britain.

The world total of deaths from angiosarcoma — a form of

liver cancer caused by VCM — is put in the report at well over 100.

But the union's national safety officer Sheila McKechnie pointed out that only after the next 10 years will the full toll be known.

This is because the average time for the disease to develop appears to be 17 years, and it was around seven years ago that levels of exposure were reduced to the present 10 parts per million in Britain and 1 ppm in the US.

So the effects on those who had higher exposures are still working their way through, she said.

The union makes clear in its report that it regards the plastics industry as of great importance to this country, particularly since North Sea oil can provide raw materials which do not need to be imported.

But it puts the blame on the industry and medical authorities for not dealing with the dangers sooner and more effectively.

Mr. Lyons said yesterday that research in the Soviet Union as early as 1949 and 1957, and in Romania in 1963, linking VCM with disease "were ignored by both the companies and relevant medical opinion."

"Key research work sponsored by British companies was conducted in secret at Bologna in Italy" and its findings were only disclosed after three deaths in the US, he said.

Mr. Lyons asked: "In whose interest did the University of Wales impose a two-year embargo on publishing a research thesis on VCM-related disease which became available only this January?" The union understands that the request for an embargo was made by BP Chemicals.

IMPERIAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES LIMITED
PLASTICS DIVISION—WELWYN GARDEN CITY

From: J STAFFORD
Division Manager
Health & Environment Protection
DSO-16
Ext 3162/3059/2096
3059 - Dr Stafford's Sec.
2096 - Telephone contact is TS

To:

Dr. T. R. Torkeelson.
Dow Chemical
Midland, Mich

Dear Ted,

I am sure you would find
this up but just in case you didn't I would
not like you to miss the lovely comment
on p 616.

J.S.
10/1/80

Date:

R&S 113185

IMPERIAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES LIMITED
PLASTICS DIVISION—WELWYN GARDEN CITY

From: J STAFFORD
Division Manager
Health & Environment Protection
DSO-16
Ext 3162/3859/2096
3859 - Dr Stafford's Sec
2096 - Telephone contact in TS

To:

Mr R Hards
Mr B Hasler
Dr F W Best
Mr G Basker
Dr D M Ferguson
Mr D Ryerson
Mr M J S Gibbons
Dr J G Kammuller
Mr P G Claus
Mr J C Thomas
Dr J P Tassignon
Dr T Garlanda
Dr T R Torkelson
Mr J Lawrence
Mr J Seawell
Mr J Hadley

Article from 'European Chemical News'
11 August 1980.

JS/MJE/DSO-16
15 August 1980

0000413
■ chemtalk

Little sympathy for ASTMS

THE UK ASTMS union's recent attack on ICI and BP Chemicals over the control of work place health hazards in the VCM/PVC industry achieved its objective of winning the union several column inches in the national press (and in the specialist press, see last week's ECM). But the publicity may have been at the expense of the union's credibility as a major influence on progress towards the improvement of industrial working conditions.

The industry was not provoked sufficiently to issue a direct response; but, more significantly, other trade unions with a more direct interest in the VCM/PVC sector were decidedly unsympathetic to ASTMS' call for tighter controls on exposure, better compensation, early retirement for all long-service, VCM/PVC workers, re-opening of talks on the EEC directive, etc.

And far from encouraging the more open dialogue between the companies and unions on the subject, the union's action was seen as likely to further aggravate the strained atmosphere within the official negotiating forum - the National Joint Advisory Council for Health and Safety in the chemical industry (NJAC).

The NJAC is now responsible for further action relating to VCM health issues but ASTMS recently boycotted a meeting specially convened to discuss occupational cancer in general and VCM in particular. One of the ASTMS demands was that VCM be once again the responsibility of a special committee like the tripartite working party which developed the 1975 UK code of practice.

The last function of the original VCM working-party was to discuss the new UK "approved" code which was to satisfy the 1978 EEC directive (approved codes of practice have a special legal significance in UK law). Although ASTMS' chances of encouraging any modification to this new UK legislation "approved" code of practice may have seemed slim, in fact the rapid pace of developments in the legislative field may have improved its chances of doing so. This is because publication of the already overdue UK law is likely to be further delayed to allow for more general occupational health legislation to be discussed.

Not only is the implementation of the EEC's important "8th amendment" law now being considered by the Health and Safety Commission but also the modification to the UK's 1978 Packaging and Labelling of Dangerous Substances Regulations which will be necessary as a result of the 8th amendment. Most importantly, major new proposals for the control of toxic substances are also under discussion.

The union is unlikely to win any re-opening of discussions on the EEC directive. But, bearing in mind the continued delay in its UK implementation and the union's increasing, if unpopular, influence in UK occupational health issues, it remains to be seen whether its demands for a re-opening of discussions on the UK law are successful.

R&S 113186

IMPERIAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES LIMITED
PLASTICS DIVISION—WELWYN GARDEN CITY

From: J STAFFORD
Division Manager
Health & Environment Protection
DSO-16
Ext J162/3859/2096
3859 - Dr Stafford's Sec
2096 - Telephone contact in 13

To:

Mr R Hards
Mr B Hasler
Dr F W Best
Mr G Basker
Dr D M Ferguson
Mr D Ryerson
Mr M J S Gibbons
Dr J G Kammüller
Mr P G Claus
Mr J C Thomas
Dr J P Tassignon
Dr T Garlanda
~~Dr T R Torkelson~~
Mr J Lawrence
Mr J Seawell
Mr J Hadley

JS/MJE/DSO-16
13 August 1980

R&S 113187

MEDICAL NEWS

 Telephone:
01-836 855

Union's accusation over GP's thesis 'rubbish'

by Jane Feinmann

THE Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs (ASTMS) has been accused of "sensationalism" and "inaccuracy" in its report published last week on the dangers of Vinyl Chloride monomer to workers involved in the production of PVC. The report which claims that VM gas, used in the production of PVC, can cause cancer of the liver, brain and lungs, and other major physical disabilities, was based largely on an MD thesis, published 3 years ago by Dr David Williams, a medical officer at BP Chemicals in Barry, Wales, a former GP.

But Dr Williams, who left

his Barry practice to work full-time for BP last week, claims that ASTMS has "misinterpreted information, got its numbers wrong and is generally inaccurate".

And he denied an accusation from ASTMS that his thesis had been "suppressed" for two years through a conspiracy between BP Chemicals and the University of Wales.

"This is absolute rubbish", Dr Williams told *Medical News*. "What actually happened was that the legal officer of BP believed that my

thesis could, if made fully public, be prejudicial to a number of cases coming before the courts because people in the know would be able to identify these cases.

"They asked me not to submit my thesis, but the senior medical officer at BP and the works general manager objected and so it was submitted. It was confidential, meaning that it was available only to bona fide researchers for a period of two years."

Dr Williams said the "in confidence" procedure for publishing MD theses was a common occurrence, used extensively by chemists researching products which had not yet gained a patent.

He said BP would shortly be issuing a "corrective" response to the ASTMS report.

But Mr Roger Lyons, ASTMS' National Chemicals Officer, and one of the authors of the VCM report, has hit back at Dr Williams' criticisms. He said he had not heard of a single inaccuracy in the report and if any existed they must have been typing errors.

And he claimed ASTMS had not received a satisfactory explanation for the two year embargo on the report.

"The information that Dr Williams collected, on how people contracted various VCM-related diseases, was very germane to a number of compensation cases. The information would have helped us immeasurably to fight BP in the courts two years ago and it is helping us now."

Mr Lyons said he was sickened by the attitude of BP Chemicals which made millions of pounds every day, yet, he alleged, was fighting every single case relating to compensation.

BP Chemicals last week revealed it had paid out large amounts of compensation to the widows of two Barry workers - one of them a five figure sum - and that eight further cases were still being negotiated.

Borrowing for surgeries doubled

OVER £8½ million has been lent to GPs in the past two years to help them buy or improve surgery premises by the General Practice Finance Corporation.

Its annual report shows that in the year 1979/80, 346 GP borrowed more than £4½ million, reflecting a rising demand for loans from GPs.

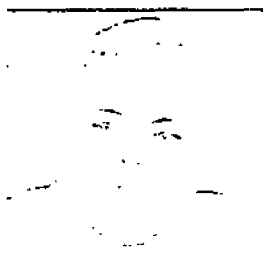
A total of 149 loans for £66 were subject to firm or conditional offers at the end of the year, compared to 107 offers for £31.4m at the same time in the previous year.

The annual report points out that many of the conditional loans currently being offered to GPs are subject to the passage of the Health Service Bill, now at the House of Lords. The GPFC exhausted its statutory borrowing limit of £25m last year and it will not be until the Health Service Bill becomes law that the borrowing limit will be increased to £40m and thereafter to £100m.

The Bill will also enable the Corporation to buy surgeries from GPs and then lease them back.

Shake-up for FPCs on the cards

ONE of the few surprises in the reorganisation package unveiled by Social Services Secretary Mr Patrick Jenkin last month, is that the role of Family Practitioner Committees is to be investigated. Methods of involving them more closely in primary care planning are to be surveyed. Mr Jenkin made this comment in the House of Commons after a summary of comments on the Government's consultative paper *Patients First* was published. He added that the Government's intention to retain FPCs had been "severely criticised". Eighty-five per cent of Local Health Authorities, 60 per cent of Area Health Authorities, 50 per cent of Community Health Councils, many nurses, administrators, treasurers, local authorities and trade unions, regretted the Government's decision to retain the present arrangements for the administration of family practitioner services. Otherwise the news that the Area Health Authorities to go by April 1982, saving the NHS an estimated millions, was widely ex-



Dr ROD GRIFFITHS
FPCs will be challenged

pected and the newly released plans differed hardly at all from those laid out in *Patients First*.

Community Health Councils got a reprieve, despite doctors calling for their dissolution at the Annual Representative Meeting in Newcastle-upon-Tyne last month. Doctors, Area Teams of Officers and District Management Teams provided the only substantial opposition to their continuation.

The overwhelming response, among 11,500 comments relating to the DHSS during the con-

Continued on page 4



"It cost the NHS more putting him right than he raised for them from his sponsored parachute jump..."

Originals
 August 1980
 Health Research
 of Seattle, WA

SOCIALIST WORKER 9 August 1980 11

ASTMS officials last week accused BP Chemicals of suppressing information about Vinyl Chloride Monomer (VCM).

VCM is a basic material for the plastics industry, but workers exposed to Vinyl Chloride suffer from a number of diseases including liver cancer.

ASTMS claim that BP told the University of Wales

to embargo a thesis written by one of their medical advisors.

The Company insisted on secrecy because eight workers from their Barry VCM plant in South Wales are claiming compensation against them. BP are claiming that the thesis is 'Sub-Judice'.

In fact it contains information that could have won higher compensation for workers exposed to VCM, and it revealed how widespread VCM poisoning is.

In America, where the dangers of VCM were first discovered, a Government official called it 'The occupational health hazard of the century'.

Before VCM was recognised as a health hazard the exposure limit in Britain was 500 parts per million (ppm). As it became clear that the chemical was lethal, the UK Chemical Industries Association, representing the main petrochemical companies, challenged or played down the risks.

A W Barnes of ICI (the other main VCM producer apart from BP) admitted: 'The policy of the Chemical Industries Association was to act to reduce concern... whether backed up by proven fact or not.'

After years of campaigning, the 'safe' level was reduced to 3ppm, but workers who for years have been exposed to massive doses of VCM are demanding compensation.

BP Chemicals have just announced a

compensation scheme, however it is an attempt to stop workers whose health has suffered from VCM taking the company to court.

ASTMS are demanding early retirement with full pay and pension for workers exposed to VCM before 1974. They are also demanding a reduction in permitted exposure levels to the American standard of 3 ppm.

The chemical industry is violently opposing these demands.

R&S 113189

000413

UNION CALLS FOR FURTHER CONTROLS ON VINYL CHLORIDE

Workers in the UK's plastics industry are still inadequately protected against the dangers of vinyl chloride monomer (VCM), according to a report from the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs (ASTMS).¹

Although permitted exposures to VCM were drastically reduced in 1975, the union wants further action to prevent "disorders of health which are now known to be associated with long-term exposure to VCM at levels at or around the current UK Threshold Limit Value (TLV) of 10 ppm."

VCM is used in the production of polyvinyl chloride (PVC), one of today's most important plastics. The UK's annual production of PVC fluctuates between 300 000 and 400 000 tonnes, and has involved a workforce of around 9 500 (Table 1) since production began in the early 1940s.

Plant	Product & dates of Production	Cumulative workforce up to end 1978
ICI Mond Hillhouse	VCM 1942-	545
ICI Plastics Hillhouse	PVC 1942-	1446
ICI Castner-Kellner	VCM 1941-	1652
(ICI Billingham	experimental plant	41)
ICI Plastics Runcorn	PVC 1973-	162
BIP Aycliffe	PVC 1953-	634
Vinatex Staveley	PVC 1969-	429
BP Barry	VCM 1948-1971	2412
	PVC 1948-	
BP Baglan Bay	VCM 1966-	2132
	PVC 1971	
		9453

Table 1. Location of workforce involved in PVC and VCM production in the UK, at the end of 1978. Since then, BIP have opened a new PVC plant at Newton Aycliffe, while ICI Mond are using VCM in the manufacture of 1, 1, 1-trichloroethane at their new plant in Runcorn.

The report first takes issue with the claim commonly made by the UK's chemical industry – most recently in the Chemical Industries Association's document on occupational cancer (ENDS Report 53, pp 12-14) – that "the whole story of the control of VCM has been of an industry reacting rapidly to an unexpected risk, identified by animal studies commissioned and paid for by the chemical industry." In fact, ASTMS claims, industrial companies have ignored evidence implicating VCM in liver disease as early as 1949, and failed to reveal the results of industry-

sponsored research which confirmed in 1972 that VCM was capable of causing a rare form of liver cancer (angiosarcoma) in rats.

It was only when the US rubber company B F Goodrich announced in January 1974 that three of its workforce had died of angiosarcoma "that the chemical industry moved into action over the carcinogenic effects of VCM. Had these workers not died, or had they died from a common form of cancer such as lung cancer", the report argues, "then it is highly probable that industry would still be arguing over whether VCM is 'really' carcinogenic or not."

After B F Goodrich made their announcement, 54 cases of angiosarcoma came to light world-wide up to October 1976, and the union believes that the total "must now be well over 100." The report quotes more recent research – including a study by the Medical Director of BP Chemicals, Barry, which was "subjected to a two-year embargo by the University of Wales at the request of BP" – which implicates VCM in chronic liver disease, brain and kidney tumours, the range of effects known as "vinyl chloride disease", and a number of other disorders.

The report sets out the union's two-pronged strategy for the VCM-PVC industry. Firstly, victims of past VCM exposures should be adequately compensated by early retirement with full pension and pay, and the DHSS Industrial Benefits scheme – which at present only provides for workers suffering from angiosarcoma and acro-osteolysis – should be extended to cover all VCM-related disorders.

Secondly, the current VCM Code of Practice should be tightened to provide an adequate margin of safety in relation to the chronic effects of VCM. Following the philosophy set out in its recent policy document on occupational carcinogens (ENDS Report 47, pp 10-12), the union calls for 'lowest feasible levels' of control – which would entail a lowering of the hygiene standard to 1 ppm (which BIP claim to have achieved in their new PVC plant) from the present TLV of 10 ppm. However, the Health and Safety Commission is shortly expected to propose a standard of only 3 ppm.

Other aspects of control policy proposed by ASTMS are the medical and biological monitoring of employees, the protection of local communities around PVC plants from VCM emissions and the inclusion of enforcement procedures in a revised Code of Practice.

¹ Vinyl Chloride Monomer: a Special Report, from ASTMS Health and Safety Office, 10-26a Jamestown Road, London NW1 7DT.

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Mr J Lawrence
Mr J Seavell
Mr J Hadley

John Manos who wrote this article had a long telephone call with me.
He has got some points of detail wrong but the overall effect he has
achieved is, I think, quite good.

J Stafford

JS/SEW/DSO-16
8 September 1980

R&S 113191

Union "goes public" over vinyl chloride

At a time when the Health and Safety Commission is preparing to implement the 1978 EEC directive on worker exposure to VCM, the ever-active Association of Scientific Technical and Managerial Staffs has complained that even that agreed control measure (it took 4 years to agree to) needs to be reviewed in the light of recent developments. The union is also unhappy about the present arrangements for compensating those suffering from VCM-induced illness and disease and about the extent of the epidemiology and health surveillance being carried out on those now working in the VCM and PVC industries.

These concerns were expressed in a special report on VCM released to the press at the end of July and which won the union several column inches of national press coverage. But accepting that 'success', it was, last month, hard to find support for the sentiments expressed by ASTMS on an issue which has, over the last six years, already attracted more research effort and expenditure than any other individual health hazard and has involved considerable rethinking of past approaches to occupational health problems, that of occupational carcinogens in particular.

A common reaction to the ASTMS document has in fact been to ask "Where was the union in 1974/75?" when the unprecedented problem (of a commercially important and widely-used plastics raw material being found to be carcinogenic) was being tackled.

That was, of course, in the days when 'joint consultation' on health and safety issues was considerably more sedate than today. But ASTMS was not involved in the early tripartite discussion because then, as now, the union had a negligible number of members exposed to the hazard.

In fact, it was the TGWU and the GMWU which represented the bulk of the affected workforce at ICI, BP Plastics, Vinatex and BIP, the four companies then

polymerising VCM to PVC. So the complaints made by ASTMS contrast with the comments made by the TGWU legal secretary Albert Blythton at the recent HSE conference when he described the success of the tripartite HSC VCM working party which oversaw the development of the UK Code of Practice during 1974/75.

The VCM working party has since been incorporated under the HSC's Advisory Committee on Toxic Substances on which of course, ASTMS is represented. But for ASTMS to come on the scene in 1980 with its barrage of complaints one might have expected the union to provide some fairly solid evidence of failure of this system. In fact, the union document is so disappointing as to discredit everything that has gone before in the union's campaign to raise awareness of health and safety issues.

'Demands' made by ASTMS in its latest document extend to tighter controls on exposure than those already expected to be contained in the HSC's forthcoming approved code of practice, more comprehensive epidemiology and worker health surveillance and more generous compensation schemes.

On compensation, the union wants early retirement for all those exposed to the high concentrations prevalent before 1974 (whether or not there has been any apparent illness) and the recognition by the DHSS industrial benefits scheme of a wider range of VCM-related illness, is not just angiosarcoma and acro-osteolysis but some of the less well-defined ailments as well.

On control, it wants a 1ppm hygiene standard as applied in the USA, a re-opening of discussions on the EEC directive and the end of manual cleaning of reaction vessels. On epidemiology it wants more medical and biological monitoring and the extension of EMAS mortality studies to include morbidity (sickness) monitoring among the present workforce. It wants protection of local communities around

PVC plants from VCM emissions, enforcement procedures to be written into the code of practice and further discussions between trade unions and legal advisors to improve company-based compensation schemes.

Clearly, in its eagerness to cover every aspect of the VCM occupational health problem, ASTMS finds nothing with which it is satisfied.

ICI 'sickened' by complaint

In presenting its case to the press, ASTMS concentrated on its dissatisfaction with the existing compensation schemes (although it knew very little about them). The union's national officer for the chemical industry, Roger Lyons, complained about the way in which the widow of one victim of VCM-induced liver cancer (angiosarcoma), an ex-employee of ICI's Hillhouse works, Mr Jack Rigby, had lost the opportunity of suing the company for compensation as a result of a last minute agreement with an ICI solicitor signed "over his death bed" shortly before his death. There was a 'new mood' among the workforce, Lyons said, in particular at BP Chemicals plant at Barry, South Wales, where three workers died from angiosarcoma during a period of nine months (bringing the total UK death toll to five).

Yet (although the union itself wrongly stated the opposite in the first version of its VCM report) Rigby, although a foreman, was not an ASTMS member. He was represented by the TGWU which together with the GMWU represents the bulk of the VCM/PVC industry's workforce. One must ask, therefore, who gave ASTMS a mandate to make such strong accusations when the TGWU's Albert Blythton told HS last month that he had no complaints about the compensation schemes which were in operation and that, in any case, they were very much an internal union issue and not for public discussion? He also stressed that he had no complaint about the effectiveness of the consultative procedures which existed now through the HSC's Advisory Committee on Toxic Substances. (Lyons had also announced that ASTMS through ACTS had requested that the VCM working party be reconstituted).

An ICI health expert commented last month that the company's management had been 'sickened' by Lyons' comments about the Rigby case. And the union's demands relating to health surveillance, manual cleaning of reaction vessels and biological monitoring - gave the impression that little progress has been achieved.

In fact, the spokesman pointed out, periodic health surveillance is a requirement of the UK Code of Practice while ICI is currently introducing its computerised MORAS health record-keeping scheme covering all workers exposed to chemicals. Also, the union's suggestion that the method of monitoring liver malfunction called Greyscale Ultrasonography (it in fact measures liver enlargement) could be useful was illfounded, according to ICI. The method had not fulfilled the earlier promise.

Similarly, the demand for an end to the manual cleaning of reaction vessels (clearly the most hazardous operation under pre-1974 conditions) ignored the fact that in most cases this had already been achieved (through the use of high pressure water cleaning devices) except in a few older installations; or at least the frequency of manual cleaning has been reduced to annual rather than weekly operations.

And the union's demand for the introduction of a method of biological monitoring to measure the extent of absorption of VCM by individual workers was unrealistic. Those methods which had been developed (in Germany) to detect metabolites of VCM in urine were only capable of responding when levels of atmospheric contamination were well above those currently prevailing in the industry.

Similar answers were readily available to most of the questions raised by ASTMS last month. Even on the issue of compensation, about which a trade union might be expected to be well informed, ASTMS seemed only to suggest that it was out of touch with what had been achieved by other unions with a more direct interest.

'A special report: vinyl chloride monomer', Association of Scientific, Technical, and Managerial Staffs, 10-26a Jamestown Road, London.

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File

VCM - VINATEX CASES

Please see the attached report in the IRS Health & Safety Bulletin p15 regarding the only "Vinatex case" which was settled by the Court - the others were settled out of court. I find the comments on immunology and lung transfer factor difficult to understand and accept.

J Stafford

JS/SEW/DSO-16
17 October 1980

0000413

R&S 113193

The proposal for a Council Directive on the risk of major accidents in certain industrial activities (OJ C 212 of 24.8.79) is aimed at preventing such accidents and at reducing their consequences when they occur.

A major accident is defined as:

A major emission, fire or explosion involving one or more dangerous substances, resulting from the uncontrolled development of an industrial activity, which could constitute a serious risk, immediate or delayed, for workers, the neighbouring population and the environment.

The proposal requires, in general, for industrial activities, or storage which involve dangerous substances, and which are likely to lead to serious consequences in the case of an accident, that:

- a safety report be drawn up,
- workers be informed, equipped and trained,
- safety drills be organised,
- the neighbouring population be informed and an emergency plan established.

In addition when certain particularly toxic, persistent exploding or flammable substances are present in quantities exceeding certain limits then notification with a more substantial dossier is compulsory. Such a dossier is also necessary if the substances fall within certain criteria of toxicity. Member States are to inform immediately the Commission of any major accidents occurring on their territory; the Commission is to set up a data bank which will contain certain information.

Action 13. *Inspection by public authorities.* The Commission is planning a joint study together with ILO and the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.

Action 14. *Schemes for information to particular categories of workers.* This action has not been developed in view of the manpower shortage.

CASENOTES

Personal injury

Employer's liability

Damages for exposure to VCM

Workers exposed to Vinyl Chloride Monomer (VCM), an important ingredient in the manufacture of PVC, may suffer a deterioration in their health if the degree of exposure is not restricted.

Where employees claim damages for injuries resulting from exposure to VCM, the court must be satisfied before awarding damages that any symptoms suffered are a result of that exposure and not attributable to any other factor. This principle is illustrated in the recent High Court case of *Millard v Vinatex Limited*.

Mr Millard was employed by Vinatex Ltd from 1969. The employers were manufacturers of PVC. During the early 1970's employees who had been exposed to fumes from VCM and dust which contained VCM complained that they were suffering from certain symptoms including a feeling of coldness of the

extremities, depression and fatigue, migraine and headaches, and aches and pains.

Mr Millard was one of a number of employees who brought claims for damages in respect of injuries suffered in the course of employment with Vinatex Limited. His main complaint was of aches and pains in his arms but he also had aches and pains in his thighs, calves and feet.

The issue before the High Court was whether these symptoms were the result of physical exposure to VCM or whether they were "due to some mild anxiety state generated by all the trouble at the plant".

On the balance of probabilities, it was shown that the symptoms were caused not by an "anxiety state" but by the physical exposure to the VCM. The results of two "objective" medical tests going some way to show this. The first showed a disturbed immunology whilst the second showed that the ability of his lungs to transfer oxygen into the blood was below normal. Both findings were common in people exposed to VCM.

Also, Mr Millard struck the court as being a level headed and sound sort of person and "notwithstanding that anybody who worked in the conditions which he did would have very real reason to feel anxiety and stress, he went back when the doctors said it was appropriate for him to go back to work and to continue to work thereafter".

In the circumstances therefore, Mr Millard was entitled to damages. As to the amount to be awarded an important consideration was that his complaints had reduced over the years. Bearing this in mind it was felt that his condition as a result of the exposure would not deteriorate as he approached his sixties and so a large sum of damages was inappropriate. However, the anxiety and worry he suffered as to the possible consequences of exposure as well as the physical disability must be taken into account when assessing damages. Consequently the High Court made an award of general damages amounting to £3500.

NEWS

Two Sets of Exemption Regulations Made

Two sets of Regulations have recently been made, empowering the HSE to grant exemptions from the provisions of existing legislation. One concerns the road transport of petroleum, and the other is on film storage.

Petroleum

The Petroleum (Consolidation) Act 1928 (Conveyance by Road Regulations Exemptions) Regulations 1980