

10980C



Friday, 2nd December, 1966

RD

NOTES ON MEETING OF ASBESTOS FIBRE
IMPORTERS AT OFFICES OF CAPE ASBESTOS

In the Chair

Mr. R. T. Lewis
of Cyprus Asbestos Co.

Secretary

Mr. M. J. Brazier
of A. A. Brazier & Co. (Asbestos Corp.)

A full list of those in attendance will
be supplied by Mr. Brazier with his
report.

AGENDA

- h) Report on current difficulties at some London Docks.
- (c) The refusal of P.L.A. labour to handle asbestos fibre
packed in impervious bags.

Mr. Lewis, the Chairman, was personally involved as
the main case concerned Cyprus fibre packed in jute

continued... ..

Could be serious. Could involve shipments being made to less convenient ports at higher cost to customers. Essential users co-operate in accepting asbestos fibre in approved bags.

- 5) To discuss the possibility of a joint policy on future packing standards for shipments of asbestos into the U.K.

(a) Packaging, palletisation or containerisation.

There was a great deal of rather rambling discussion on this. The general idea seemed to be that attention should be paid to the quality of the present acceptable paper lined hessian bag before trying to develop something new. On pallets Mr. Brazier stated that in conversations with shipping people they had commented that as far as they were concerned it would be a long time before they had an adequate supply of pallets available. It was also stressed by some who had carried out tests that palletisation alone was not the answer as, obviously, bags on pallets could be punctured quite easily. Therefore, some additional form of protection, for example cardboard, was necessary, all of which increased the cost. Reference was made to containers holding several tons being considered, but although this could be the answer in the future, it was useless until facilities were available for discharge and handling at most ports and users' plants.

(b) Quality standards for jute, paper and polythene.

It was considered desirable to suggest to the Ministry of Labour that they be rather more specific in this respect, as this would give the various importers more guidance as to what experience had shown to be acceptable.

Note for JM internal consideration.

Our own bags are very poor and the quality of the burlap is low. It should be appreciated that no

continued.....

useful purpose will be served by using a package that simply conforms to the rather vague specification but it must be effective. Failure to do so may well lead to labour at U.K. docks refusing to accept and handle this type of package as in fact they are already doing at some London docks.

(c) Standards for sealing and sewing bags.

This was conceded to be very important since it is useless to have impervious bags if there is danger of leakage at the joints.

(d) Interchange of reports on trial shipments of new packings, palletisation etc.

The general feeling was that this was desirable, but most present said they would have to refer back to their principals for permission. W. Scott of Cape admitted they have a trial shipment en route from South Africa on pallets. The type of packing used is no longer a matter just between supplier and customer, but is subject to approval by the Ministry of Labour, Unions and their medical advisers and shipping lines. Therefore, it was in our joint interests to exchange information. Reference was also made to the possibility of obtaining more information as to what work had been done in Canada in this respect, where co-operation on such matters is much more advanced than in South Africa.

6) The Ministry of Labour's proposed revisions of the asbestos industry regulations.

(a) This is generally considered to be a matter for the various asbestos manufacturing associations.

continued.....

In general this was so, but I pointed out, and others agreed, that many users considered their asbestos fibre suppliers as the experts and, therefore, came to us for advice. This was particularly so when the local factory inspector had proved exceptionally difficult.

- (h) The asbestos importers are generally already complying with the proposed alterations to these regulations by shipping in impervious bags.

It was agreed this is so.

- 7) Suggestions for refuting and correcting misleading information circulated in the Press, particularly the Sunday Times.

There was, of course, considerable resentment about this harmful propaganda, but in general it was agreed that any efforts to counter attack with replies in the Press would do more harm than good. The Board of Directors of Cape Asbestos and Turner and Newall had both rejected any idea of a counter campaign in the Press.

Main Points were:-

1. Any reply to be effective must be immediate and it could be difficult to arrange an agreed response from a group such as ours.
2. Most of the letters are of a medical nature, reply to which would be useless unless written by a neutral doctor of high standing.
3. The damage is done with the initial letter and reply would lead to further expansion of the correspondence leading to even more publicity.
4. Probably more damage is done by dock side local newspapers rather than the National Press.

ADDITIONAL POINTS:

1. Mrs. Butler, a Labour MP, is to ask a question in the House on 12th December regarding asbestos fibre. Details not known.
2. Central Director admitted that they had received a shipment in November. There will be no more.
2. A further meeting will be called for early January by which time the situation at leader works should have crystallised and it is also hoped that decisions will be available on exchange of information on quantities of trial shipments.

4/5