Monsanto

FROM (NAME & LOCATION): B2SC P. G. Benignus

DATE: March 23, 1973

SUBJECT: Canadian G.E. Guelph, Ontario (General Electric Canada)

REFERENCE:

cc B2SL T. L. Gossage
B2SC C. Paton
B2SL H. S. Bergen

TO : B2NA
W. B. PAPAGEORGE

On Thursday, March 22, Vern Mulhall phoned from Canadian G.E., Guelph plant, seeking aid on what he described as a PCB environmental contamination situation. I purposely avoid going into the alarming aspects of this thing as given to us yesterday afternoon because after the G.E. people did the following things, the anxiety has simmered down markedly.

Accordingly Mr. Mulhall phoned again today, Friday, March 23. He also phoned Mr. Oneson this morning. Oneson in turn phoned us at St. Louis giving us the first insight that this thing was not as critical as originally portrayed by Mr. Mulhall. Today Mr. Mulhall outlined the following:

1. This is not a direct spill of PCBs.

2. It is a spillage of mineral oil into a swamp area on the Guelph plant premises. Because the swamp area has had PCB in it for years, the belief now is that some of this PCB got out with the mineral oil spillage.

3. On Thursday evening, March 22, Mulhall met in the G.E. main office at Toronto with

   a. Legal people, including Allen Trites
   b. G.E. Construction and Environmental people
   c. G.E. Public Relations people
   d. G.E. top management people

4. The Canadian Pollution Probe People (these are private people like the Sierra Club) had given notice to the newspapers in Guelph and at Kitchner that there was an environmental contamination involving PCBs and the article mentions Monsanto as the sole manufacturer. The information given to the newspapers contained possible libelous statements according to Mulhall and for this reason certain news editors were alarmed to the extent that they did not know where to publish this information.

In effort to counteract this G.E. prepared their own news release and gave it to the newspaper editors. At the time of Mulhall's phone call he did not know whether this was released by the news media.

5. Ontario Water Resources people (Ministry of the Environment will determine the PCB concentration in the water of the Speed River. G.E. met with these people this Friday -- March 23. These people had taken tests last year and found the swamp contained PCB in the range of 90 parts per billion to 158 parts per million in the earth located at the plant's outfall. No detectable PCB was found in the river up stream. This is to say the amount was recorded as less than ten parts per billion. Last fall these people found 380 parts per billion of PCBs at the storm sewer discharge into the Speed River.

6. The McClaren Environmental Consultants, located in London, Ontario, are now being contacted by the G.E. Guelph people pursuant to taking river water samples for analysis at this time.

7. The Ontario Research Foundation people will determine the PCB content of the samples being taken by the McClaren people from the swamp.

8. Mr. Mulhall asked that you please phone Forrest Rankine on your return to the office next Monday morning. Mr. Rankine is located at the Guelph plant.

P. G. Benignus

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