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TUESDAY, JANUARY 14, 1975.

Health and the Worker

Asbestos, it has recently been determined, is a substance that works insidiously in the human body by slowly building up a concentration of minute particles until cancer results. In fact, some scientists predict that this country will soon experience a near-epidemic of cancer deaths among men and women who have for years worked with asbestos.

With this alarming information available, federal health standards for companies dealing in asbestos have quite naturally been toughened. But their effectiveness is questionable in light of information that American manufacturers of products made from asbestos are moving their production to countries where health regulation is virtually non-existent. Side benefits, of course, are substantially lower manufacturing costs and increased profit after the products are imported to this country.

The same tactic is being used by manufacturers of products which use vinyl chloride, another known cancer-producing agent used in plastics manufacture. But American manufacturers are

not the only ones seeking more lenient havens for their plants. Swedish industrialists faced with stringent regulation of worker exposure to vinyl chloride, are talking about moving their operations to Morocco.

In this country, there may be a way to combat the tactic. The Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union has suggested a ban on the import of any product if the manufacturer has left the U.S. for a country with less stringent laws to protect workers. Noting that any widespread movement of hazardous industries from the U.S. could cause a drain on the nation's balance of payments, other officials have pointed to the dramatic growth of U.S. imports of asbestos textiles from seven "unregulated" countries — from zero in 1968 to more than 3 million pounds in 1973, representing 51 per cent of the total imports.

Whether the new Congress will take any action in this area isn't known yet but maybe they will if they're convinced that human life should be an entry in the profit-and-loss columns.

The Prisoner

Out of nothing more than simple humanity, it is difficult not to feel sorry for former President Richard Nixon, who last week observed his 62nd birthday in the "quiet isolation" of his San Clemente estate.

According to one report, no celebration was planned and indeed it seems that Mr. Nixon has little cause to celebrate anything. For his is a shattered life: he is in serious financial difficulty, he remains under treatment for phlebitis and the mention of his name is sufficient to elicit scornful comments from Democratic and Republican alike.

commuted to "time served" by Judge John Sirica, Richard Nixon in effect remains a prisoner. The saying, "stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage" is particularly appropriate here, for Mr. Nixon occupies a prison of his own making; it is built on the memories of his administration's success, which were disastrously overshadowed by the manner in which his presidency ended. But

thoughts of his

Jan

WASHINGTON
ginning of the most hopeful season is the gerpretense. There windbags arou that everything rosy, but on t mood here is se is a greater will the economic facts.

This is a big promises now. claimed saviors generations of i perity. Just a guys in trouble way out and a It's not very he little nearer to n

Suddenly, all have been cut d size. The Preside tend he has all One day he is figl with budget cuts taxes, but he char facts and proposes a bigger deficit to cession, and doe much over the switc

Even the Presi who is expected by strike an adoring her guy in public li fallible husband. V on television celeb tional woman's ye day, she took him and laughed and has "come a long, l

Things are so b even the Vice i given work to do predecessors. Ne feller is spending time downtown or floor of the Exe Building across th the White House, for a stream of hasn't had time to the new vice pres on. Observatory B his family to tovganize his staff, b is deeply involve and foreign polic tion the CIA contr getting almost signments than l handle.

The mood is Capitol Hill, t members of th Representatives to slip quietly into their hats to the establishment. Th new Democratic rived and deman to question the