Gold Bond

NATIONAL GYPSUM COMPANY 915

INTEROFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

To: E. J. Killian
Vice-President

Subject: Asbestos Problems
Asbestos Cement Products Association

Date: April 10, 1969

From: F. H. Zimmerman

cc: L. B. Crowell



No action by either Gold Bond advising other

In regards to the study that Dr. George Wright is considering for the New Orleans area, I would suggest that we cooperate to the fullest extent that we can, with your approval, after recommendations from your production people. I feel it would also be advisable to consult our Insurance Department in regards to what could become very high risk premium problems. (We have this problem in the Millington Plant, with 17 suspected cases, which prompted Lloyds of London not to reinsure us in this area. It was necessary for our brokers to find other insurance coverage at a higher premium). I might also add that in talking to Johns-Manville today that they are going to cooperate in the study -- to what extent, I do not know as yet but will hear in the very near future.

The basis for the study is that the two scientists from Tulane Medical School discovered five cases of lung cancer in asbestos workers suffering from asbestosis. They contacted Dr. Wright. He immediately flew to New Orleans, studied their reports and findings and concurred with them. They were not National Gypsum employees, but employees of the Flintkote Company who previously were operating in the New Orleans area. These doctors are to be complimented in the method they handled this -- in advising Dr. Wright instead of seeking front page publicity, as others have in the New York area.

Dr. Wright, in his trip to New Orleans, requested from us permission to visit our New Orleans Plant, in the company of the two doctors from Tulane. As a result of the visit at our plant, and Johns-Manville, it was decided that it would be advantageous to the industry if a study were made in this area. Thus the proposal that you have.

In regards to the Health and Safety Council of the Asbestos Cement Products Association, a brief summary of how this organization came into the picture would be as follows:

> On April 3, 1968, Cliff Scheckler, Manager, Occupational Environmental Control for Johns-Manville invited the representatives of Certain-Teed, General Aniline & Film, Flintkote, Owens-Corning and National Gypsum to a meeting in New York city, at their headquarters, primarily to give an industry-wide acceptance to a booklet entitled -- "Recommended Health Safety Practices for Handling and Applying Asbestos Cement Products." A personal and confidential letter is attached that I wrote in objection to this publication. It eventually came to the attention of Mr. Colon Brown who called a meeting with Jack Hayes, Bill Duncan and myself in attendance. From that meeting, Al Fay was also made aware of the problem. On April 17, a letter was drafted, copy attached, sent to Mr. Scheckler outlining our company's objections to the booklet. In the meantime, Al Fay reactivated

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an organization known as the "Mineral Fiber Products Bureau" to alert everyone in the industry of the problem caused by the booklet Johns-Manville wishes to print. Al's group met in New York at a later date and reactivated the group, changing its name to the "Asbestos Cement Products Association", mainly to handle on an industry-wide basis the problems being caused by adverse asbestos publicity and the Johns-Manville book. The group then organized two sub-committees to write a code on "Recommended Health Safety Practices for Handling and Applying Asbestos Cement Products" and a code to be entitled "In Plant Environmental Control".

This is about the state where we are at the present time. Arrangements have been made today for meetings of both committees to be held April 23 and 24, at Johns-Manville's New Jersey Research Center. As this is just a short synopsis -- there are literally tons of newspapers, magazines, statements from various health authorities, federal and state recommendations -- most of which were sent to Mr. Brown by Karl V. Lindell, Chairman of the Executive Committee, Johns-Manville. This file is in my office and you are welcome to any portion of it.

In my opinion, this is the time to keep cool on all the heated emotion that is being caused by the medical fraternity. It is quite apparent that in the very near future, there are going to be many federal regulations controlling the health and safety aspects of asbestos workers. These laws are now in the 91st Congress. If we can keep industry calm and do all in our power to clean up our own plants, and suggest the industry do the same, and make people available for Advisory Committee work when called upon to write the standards that will protect the worker, and still be within reason for the industry, we will have a fighting chance to stay in business at a reasonable cost.

I hope this run-down will be of some use to you and we can further discuss it Saturday morning, at your convenience.

FHZ:rs
Attachments

Director of Safety

P. S. Please excuse the notes and scratching on some of the attached booklets - they are the only ones I have left. I would appreciate the file returned when you are through with it.

Returned to FHZ.

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