

JOHN J. HANRAHAN

March 28, 1974

TO: A. Baker
R. Henderson
G. Henrich
R. Pendergast

Re: "The Machinist"

More on the vinyl chloride problem.

J.J. Hanrahan

OLI 1284

For Polyvinyl Chloride

IAM ASKS EMERGENCY HEALTH RULE

F. L.
V. C. M.
Vinyl chloride



Smith
IAM President Floyd Smith has appealed to the U.S. Department of Labor for an emergency health standard to protect Americans working with polyvinyl chloride.

The appeal is the result of the deaths of five workers at a B.F. Goodrich Chemical plant in Louisville, Ky. The five, none of whom were IAM members, died of angiosarcoma, a rare cancer of the liver. All of the victims worked with polyvinyl chloride, a plastic used in many indus-

trial and commercial processes.

Smith appealed to John Stender, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Health, in Washington, D.C. By telegram, the IAM President pointed out:

"Five deaths have already been documented. As many more

deaths at the same plant are still under investigation. Countless more may still be undetected at other plants in other cities. Experts have warned that this occupational health problem could reach epidemic proportions. A

(See HEALTH RULE, page 7

HEALTH RULE . . . from page 1

emergency standard is needed immediately.

Stender was expected to act on the requests sometime this week. The Labor Department already has held public hearings on the hazards in the Louisville plant.

The list of deaths linked to working with polyvinyl chloride may grow. While the list now stands at five, Haskell Marshall, directing rep for IAM District 27, Louisville, reports that seven more deaths in recent years may also have been caused by the chemical.

Marshall reports that the IAM shop committee has a list of seven Goodrich workers who have died of various forms of cancer. One, IAM member James Cecil, died in 1968 of cirrhosis of the liver. Another IAM member, Barney Duke, died of leukemia. One other worker died of leukemia, two of lung cancer and two of brain cancer.

At last month's hearings in Washington, Dr. Thomas Mancu-

so, an occupational cancer researcher from the University of Pittsburgh, warned that liver cancer might not be the only hazard of working with polyvinyl chloride. He added other industrial diseases including skin cancer, bone cancer, lung cancer and cirrhosis of the liver.

Marshall adds that 60 members of IAM Local 681 at Goodrich are still on strike at the Louisville plant. The strike began Dec. 11, 1973. The issues are wages and contract language, as well as job safety.

Unions Sue Labor Dept.

The AFL-CIO, its Industrial Union Department and the Illinois State AFL-CIO are suing the U.S. Labor Department to stop further weakening of the Federal Occupational Safety and Health law. The AFL-CIO suit asks the courts to stop the Labor Department from transferring the enforcement of the job safety law back to state agencies.