From the desk of

A. C. Siefert

Finish [illegible]
Ed. Edwards
→ D.R. Bishop (N)

March 7, 1966

Re Wall Street Journal 3-3-66

To: Mr. R. J. McEvoy

This could cause quite a furor.

Dr. Selikoff may just be establishing a long term job for himself.

Besides being concerned about our use of asbestos in Kaylo, we should be aware that glass fibers could be next target.

You might forward to our Health people.

Regards,

/s/ Augie

ACS/ba

tachment

COURTESY OF SPENCER-WALKER PRESS INC.

Asbestos Dust Called a Hazard To at Least One-Fourth of U.S

By JANE E. BRODY

Asbestos dust, which has already been connected with the development of fatal cancer in one-half of asbestos workers, may be a potential health hazard for one-quarter of the population or more, it was reported yesterday.

This preliminary finding was described by Dr. Irving J. Selikoff in announcing the establishment of an environmental health laboratory at Mount Sinai Hospital. The laboratory will further investigate the dangers to man of asbestos and other environmental contaminants.

Dr. Selikoff said the link between cancer and asbestos had led him to suspect that other mineral dusts that contaminate both urban and rural air might create medical hazards for the public.

The new laboratory will be headed by Dr. Selikoff who, with Dr. Jacob Churg, found that asbestos workers eventually showed six to seven times the normal death rate from lung cancer and three times the normal death rate from cancer of the stomach, colon and rectum.

Other Workers Affected

Dr. Selikoff noted that the dangers of exposure to asbestos dust were not limited to those who work directly with this ubiquitous insulator and filler material. The dangers, he said, extend to workers in "contiguous trades," such as other construction workers and their families.

According to the findings of three recent limited studies, the dangers might extend to the general population. The studies which involved autopsies of 1,100 persons in three cities showed that 25 per cent of the people had asbestos lodged in their lungs.

Dr. Selikoff explained that the studies had used a "[illegible] technique" that disclosed only those asbestos fibers that had become coated by an iron-rich material while lodged in the lungs. A more refined technique now shows that many persons harbor noncoated asbestos fibers as well, he said.

New Study Started

Dr. Selikoff and his colleagues at the new laboratory have started a three-year study in which they will:

¶Examine, with the deceased's family's approval, the lung tissue of the from [illegible] 4,000 persons expected to [illegible] the next two years at Mount Sinai, Elmhurst Hospital and Veterans Hospital in the Bronx. The doctors will look for the coated as well as coated asbestos fibers in the tissues.

¶Look for correlations between the causes of death and the presence of asbestos fibers in lung tissue.

¶Determine the occupational history of the deceased and their relatives and other pertinent background information.

Long-Wearing Mineral

Asbestos is a fibrous mineral highly valued for its noncorrosive and long-wearing properties. In addition to its common use as a fireproof material, Dr. Selikoff said, asbestos makes up about 50 per cent of asphalt tile and is used in dental cement, brake linings, plastics, beer filters, gas masks and paper. Until last year, some schools used asbestos dust instead of sand for children to play in.

The annual world production of asbestos has jumped from 500,000 tons in the nineteen thirties to about 4 million tons currently.

Dr. Selikoff declared that asbestos was "a marvelous material, but we have to learn how to use and live with it."

Modern protection methods for asbestos workers include exhaust ventilation, wetting to keep dust down and the wearing of a respirator.

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