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TURNER & NEWALL LIMITED
Board Meeting, 29th April 1971

Asbestos and health progress report
for quarter ended 31st March 1971

Government

The case for a further meeting with Members of Parliament is still under review. Lord Kennet, Lord Crook and Lady Summerskill have declined the invitation of the Chairman of the ARC to visit the Rochdale factory, on the grounds of the time involved. The Cape members of the ARC have now offered to co-operate by arranging a visit to one of their factories in the London area and a further approach is being made.

Medical

1. Senior Medical Inspector's Advisory Panel

The full Panel has not met since the last report, but a meeting was convened in London on 4th February 1971, attended by the Medical Officers of Cape Asbestos Co. Ltd., BBA Group Ltd. and T.B.A.Co.Ltd. (T.& N.). The purpose of the meeting was to reach agreement on the operation of the proposed surveillance programme for asbestos workers and to iron out some of the difficulties. The scheme will be phased into operation and initially will only include workers in the factories of Cape, BBA and T.B.A.Co.Ltd. The other T.& N. Companies will be included when they have made the necessary improvements to their medical examination schemes and have appointed suitable medical officers. When the revised structure of the Medical Services Division of the Department of Employment (formerly the Medical Branch of the Factory Inspectorate) allows for expansion of the scheme, all asbestos workers will come under surveillance. (The next full meeting of the Panel will be on 27th April 1971).

The Chemical Branch of the Factory Inspectorate has had preliminary discussions with the ARC member companies concerning the monitoring of the environment to which the asbestos workers taking part in the medical study are exposed. It is expected that the measurements will be taken by company staff.

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2. Industrial Medical Officers Seminars at T.B.A.Co.Ltd.

Seven seminars were completed during the quarter and they appear to have fulfilled a need. The participants have been loud in their praise and were obviously impressed by the efforts of the industry to manufacture products which are quite safe to handle.

3. An X-Ray survey at Newalls Insulation & Chemical Co. Ltd., Washington, has demonstrated the need for more intensive medical surveillance of asbestos workers. Efforts are being made to arrange for the periodic examination of factory and contracts workers. The latter group was not included in the recent survey. Newalls Insulation & Chemical Co. Ltd. has the sad record of having the highest annual incidence of asbestosis cases diagnosed in Unit Companies. The largest proportion of cases occurs amongst laggers. The attached tabulation of new cases diagnosed in the U.K. by four panels shows that 48% of new cases diagnosed between 1955 and 1969 occurred in the insulating industry.

Medical Literature

Three publications of significance have appeared in the medical literature in recent months:-

1. "Asbestosis in South African Asbestos Miners"
G. K. Sluis-Cremer, Environmental Research (1970) 3 ; 310-319

A study was carried out on the fate in 1970 of South African Caucasian miners working on the North West Cape Crocidolite mines and the Transvaal Amosite mines between 1954 and 1958. Bantu miners were also studied. From this study the following emerged:-

a) No person in the population studied has developed bronchial carcinoma or mesothelioma of the pleura.

b) There is a high incidence of minimal radiological asbestosis in Bantu labourers without clinical significance. They may progress with time to significant disease even in the absence of further exposure.

c) Conditions on the surface and underground have improved greatly in the North West Cape, but less so in the Amosite mines. Surface dust contains a higher proportion of fibre than underground dust.

d) The diagnosis of asbestosis increases with length of service. Calcified pleural plaques without lung changes were considered diagnostic of asbestosis.

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e) Lung function tests were not of value in early diagnosis except possibly measurement of Vital Capacity in the 40-49 years age group.

f) The author concludes that "This study indicates that there is no way to pinpoint persons with minimal exposure in life in order to remove them from further exposures early; .....the physiological tests in this series do not indicate persons who might have early asbestosis with normal X-Rays".

2. "Epidemiology of Asbestos Cancers"
J. C. Wagner, J. C. Gilson, G. Berry and V. Timbrell
British Medical Bulletin (1971) 27 : 71

This paper reviews the current world situation with regard to asbestos cancers (including mesothelioma). The authors show that mesothelioma occurs in the United Kingdom in shipyards and asbestos factories. The risk of bronchial cancer is more clearly related to the intensity of past exposure and to the risk of asbestosis. Environmental control can reduce this risk dramatically. It is not known whether the risk in man is related to the type of asbestos inhaled in the case of bronchial carcinoma. Cigarette smoking is important and increases the bronchial carcinoma risk.

Mesothelioma is less certainly dose-related. Exposure to Anthophyllite very rarely, if ever, causes mesotheliomata. Exposure to Chrysotile alone is also probably a rare cause. In a majority of cases, exposure has been to Crocidolite and/or Amosite with or without Chrysotile. Present opinion rates the risk from Crocidolite higher than that from Amosite.

The authors suggest that prevention requires:-

(i) Substitution by alternative materials for insulation. They do warn that information about the possible long-term effects from dust due to substitute materials is incomplete, and their use should be adequately observed in future.

(ii) Use of safer types of asbestos. Crocidolite is probably the one which should be eliminated wherever possible.

(iii) Dust control and personal protection. The ARC Codes of Practice are recommended.

(iv) Threshold-Limit values as recommended by the BOHS.

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3. "Diffuse Malignant Pleural Mesothelioma and Asbestos Exposure" P. Whitwell and Rachel M. Ravoliffe
Thorax (1971) 26 : 6

This is a very good technical paper describing the diagnostic features of pleural mesothelioma in 52 patients in three hospitals on Merseyside between 1955 and 1970. Association with asbestos was confirmed from industrial histories in 80% of cases, the commonest industries involved being shipbuilding and repairing in men and sackware repairing in women. Lungs of industrial asbestos mesothelioma cases showed basal asbestosis in 17% and "excessive asbestos bodies in almost all the rest". More "asbestos bodies" were found in lung smears from mesothelioma cases than in lung smears from other Merseyside adults. The authors feel that because of the long latent interval from first exposure until diagnosis, the incidence of mesothelioma will contine to rise with the increased use of asbestos until about 40 years after adequate protective measures have been taken.

The strongest criticism of this paper is that no differentiation is made between the effects of different types of asbestos. No positive identification by means of electron microscopy, electron diffraction or X-Ray diffraction of the fibre core in "asbestos bodies" was attempted. 77% of the patients were men, reflecting the fact that asbestos exposure on Merseyside is predominantly a male occupational hazard. There was no evidence that radical surgery or chemotherapy affected the prognosis favourably. Mesothelioma patients survived longer than those with other inoperable forms of lung cancer.

Asbestosis Research Council

Negotiations have now been completed for the concentration of the Council's research work in an Asbestosis Research Council Foundation within the M.C.B. Institute of Occupational Medicine. The formal agreement was signed in Edinburgh on 6th April.

Customers

An interim reply has been sent to the Home Office by the Chairman of the ARC/ECC, emphasising the low dust counts encountered with asbestos door seals in cookers.

The Shell Group has recently deleted a number of asbestos products from their list of approved materials, replacing them by non-asbestos substitutes. T.B.A.Co.Ltd. has been most concerned at the deletion of asbestos cloth, particularly in view of the development of Fortex. Discussions have taken place on this subject and two Shell Medical Officers have attended the T.B.A.Co.Ltd. Seminars. These gentlemen have taken a very favourable view of Fortex and are inclined to

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regard it as a new material. It is likely that they will recommend its adoption as a safe alternative to conventional asbestos cloth.

Docks

There have been no important developments. Facilities for bringing in fibre from Canada in containers are steadily improving and have largely solved the problem for a large proportion of the asbestos imported into the U.K.

Overseas Liaison

a) U.S.A.

The Asbestos Information Association/North America is now operative and held its inaugural press briefing conference in New York at the beginning of March.

In February and March we had visits from Mr. H. McNabb, President of the AIA/NA and from Mr. W. P. Rainss, Secretary and Mr. E. M. Fenner, Johns-Manville's Director of Environmental Control, who is also a member of the Association. Very useful discussions on matters of common interest took place and continuing close association between the American and British bodies seems essential.

The AIA/NA recently proposed to the Institute of Occupational and Environmental Health, Montreal, that its Scientific Committee should become a collective consulting body to the AIA/NA. The proposal was rejected although members of the Scientific Committee would be free to serve as consultants to the AIA/NA as individuals. We believe this decision to be an unfortunate one and are seeking further information.

The situation in New York gives cause for much concern. The proposed amendment to the New York City Air Pollution Code will, if adopted, ban asbestos spray and the wording employed in the draft could be interpreted as ordering a complete ban on asbestos in any form except when used in brake-linings. The adverse publicity effect of such a ban would be experienced universally and we have stressed to the AIA/NA our great concern about the outcome. A representative of the AIA/NA testified at the Public Hearing in January but there were many others speaking in support of the ban and the general belief is that the amendment will be adopted.

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b) Western Germany

The Wirtschaftsverband Asbestzement now appears to be showing more interest in asbestos and health and is collaborating with the Wirtschaftsverband Asbest e.V. in the commissioning of a German version of the AIC film "Why Asbestos?". Fifteen copies are being ordered.

c) France

Adverse press comment on asbestos and health has continued and the Chambre Syndicale de l'Amiante may assume more of the duties of an information body. They have advised the AIC that they will almost certainly commission a French version of "Why Asbestos?".

d) Sweden

A serious situation has arisen. As a result of past attacks upon asbestos in the press and other media and through pressure from the Workers' Protection Association, one of the main shipyards has virtually banned all uses of asbestos and other yards are viewing asbestos with increasing suspicion. TAC C.M.Ltd. officials have recently visited Sweden in order to combat this situation. A Swedish television programme is likely to feature asbestos shortly and we have supplied a copy of the film "Why Asbestos?" and have offered other help to the programme producer. The absence of a Swedish or Scandinavian information body is much to be regretted.

e) Holland

It is expected that an advisory report on the use of asbestos will be published shortly by the Dutch Labour Inspector.

f) Australia

New Asbestos Regulations have been adopted by the State of Queensland and will take effect on 11th July. They are based upon our own Asbestos Regulations but in certain respects are more stringent.

Press Relations

The publishers of "The Doomsday Book" are satisfied with the reply of the author, Mr. Gordon Rattray-Taylor, to the AIC critique and see the dispute between the two parties as part of a continuing debate. Nevertheless, the AIC has reiterated its desire for a meeting with the publishers and/or author to discuss the author's arguments. The book was published in America in September 1970 without attracting attention, but a Danish issue has brought adverse press publicity on asbestos.

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Further letters have been sent to the Nursing Times and The General Municipal Workers Union Journal on the facts regarding a general environmental risk.

On the positive side a syndicated feature article has been sent to 165 provincial newspapers and cuttings are already being received as a result. A press release on the ARC Note on Asbestos Dust Sampling Procedures has been sent to occupational hygiene instrumentation and engineering papers.

Literature

The ARC Technical Note 2 - Dust Sampling Procedures for Use with the Asbestos Regulations 1969 - has been published. ARC Control and Safety Guides Nos.2 and 5 have also been revised and reprinted.

Film

The film libraries continue to report encouraging forward bookings and it is of interest that there has so far been a bigger proportion of showings to technical audiences than had been expected.

Total sales of the film now amount to 47 copies, 26 of these being to overseas countries. As already mentioned, German and French versions of the film will shortly be prepared and further sales of the English version can be expected, mainly overseas.

Speakers Panel

About 80% of safety organisations affiliated to RoSPA have now been covered and future bookings are less numerous. It is hoped that engagements for some of the residual 20% may yet be arranged.

Further speakers' engagements are expected to arise in connection with film bookings, particularly where technical audiences are concerned.

AIC Expenses

The expenses of the AIC for October, November, December and January are set out below:-

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	£
Hill & Knowlton staff-time charges	5,666.24
Hill & Knowlton out-of-pocket expenses	720.54
	6,386.78
Less film credits £1,200.00 and postage credit £54.24	1,254.24
	5,132.54
Taylor Wishart Ltd. (Advertising)	15,926.10
Verity Films Ltd.	
Production (Final Quarter)	3,862.00
64 Prints	1,770.66½
Thomas Jenkins (Printers)	
Why Asbestos Booklets (2 kinds)	995.75
BBA Group Ltd.	
Display Unit renovation	50.50
Speakers Panel	
J. C. Byrom	83.61½
	27,821.17

The T.& W.Ltd. share of these expenses amounted to £16,136.28.

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