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Last 40th Street
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Thursday
17th Oct
1968

RECEIVED
A. C. SMITH
NOV 7 1968

Dear Mr. Burnett,

Asbestos Beer Filters

The enclosed notes on the use of asbestos beer filters are slightly updated on the notes I sent you on the 15th July. They now incorporate references to reassuring statements by the British Minister of Health in the House of Commons and by the British Medical Journal.

Yours sincerely,

W P HOWARD
Public Relations Officer

WPH/SK
enc

(1) There is no evidence that the ingestion of asbestos is harmful in any way - particularly in such minute quantities as this. The Minister of Health has stated (25th July 1968) that the presence of these fibres in beer has not been shown to be harmful

(2) Fibres of this size would normally be eliminated from the human system by the usual processes. As the British Medical Journal, in a comment on the 1967 annual report of the British Empire Campaign for Cancer Research, stated on the 13th July 1968, "It is comforting that ingested asbestos fibres are not absorbed."

(3) The incidence of gastric cancer (neoplasm of the stomach) has been steadily declining for many years. In the United Kingdom, there has been a reduction in the number of cases of over 10% (1952: 16,663 cases - 1965: 14,930 cases) over 13 years. It is worth noting that over the twenty years before 1952 the figures for U.K. annual beer production rose by 70%, and between 1952 and 1965 by another 13%

Not all the fibres discovered appear to be chrysotile (white asbestos) and no crocidolite (blue asbestos) is used in the manufacturing of filter pads.

24. 7.1968