PRESS QUERY

SUBJECT: PCBs SOURCE OF ANSWER: Files

COMPANY: Monsanto Industrial Chemicals Co. HANDLED BY: E. V. John
Operating Unit

REPORTER & MEDIA: Mr. Streuli, CBS News, New York

DATE & TIME: Feb. 3, 1972, 3:30 p.m.

Q: I am involved with the CBS environmental series. We are putting together a program on the problem of ocean pollution and the subject of PCB came up. Since PCB is not deliberately spread like DDT, do you have any opinion as to how it might have gotten into the environment?

A: (I briefly described the 40-year history of PCB and emphasized for most of these years PCB was thought to be a harmless or inert substance. I also mentioned the original work done by Swedish scientists, followed by others and the more recent development of sophisticated methodology which allows identification of minute substances in the environment.) In my opinion, since PCB, for many years, was thought to be harmless, it likely could have entered the environment through improper handling and use.

Q: When did Monsanto decide to restrict sales to closed systems?

A: In mid-1970.

Q: I understand PCB is no longer used in carbonless carbon paper.

A: That is correct.

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Q: Could PCB enter the environment by burning carbonless carbon paper or plastics.

A: Some have speculated that this could be one source.

Q: Does Monsanto feel it was pressured into restricting sales?

A: I think our action was a combination of 1) realizing a potential problem and 2) doing something about it. Some people would say this is "pressure"; others would say it was "a voluntary action."

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