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Office of Industry Advisory Committee

Washington, D. C.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

AMERICAN TEXTILE INDUSTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Date: April 12, 1943

Place: Social Security Building, Washington, D. C.

Government W. T. Maloy
Presiding Cork, Asbestos and Fibrous Glass Division
Officer: War Production Board

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

(* Present at Meeting)

George L. Abbot,
The Garlock Packing Company
Palmyra, New York

* G. W. Marshall, Jr.
Raybestos-Manhattan, Inc
Manheim, Pennsylvania

* O. H. Carr, Jr.,
Carolina Asbestos Company
Davidson, North Carolina

H. Gordon Smith
U. S. Rubber Company
New York, New York

* Geo. S. Fabel,
Thermoid Company
Charlotte North Carolina

Oscar Trumbull,
Green, Tweed and Company
New York, New York

* John W. Ledeboer,
Keasbey & Mattison Company
Ambler, Pennsylvania

E. J. Wakem,
Johns-Manville Sales Corporation
New York, New York

Rudolph Wild
Union Asbestos & Rubber Company
New York, New York

Industry Advisory Committees are representative groups formed for the purpose of furnishing advice and information to the War Production Board on matters furthering the war effort. No actions are taken or decisions made in these meetings, as they are solely for advisory purposes.

Suggested subjects for consideration at future meetings may be sent to the Govt. Agent, Presiding Officer, listed above.

This summary has been sent to:

1. Entire Industry
2. Committee members and Government representatives

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Asbestos Textiles Industry
Advisory Committee
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PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

The Asbestos Textiles Industry Advisory Committee met on April 12, 1945, to discuss (1) Labor problems, particularly the effect of Selective Service on the industry, and assistance received from local government organizations; (2) Production of asbestos textiles, and measures whereby increased production of more critical materials can be obtained; and (3) Present supply and inventory position on asbestos fibres. Mr. W. T. Meloy of the Cork, Asbestos and Fibrous Glass Division of War Production Board served as the presiding officer.

LABOR

The meeting was turned over to Mr. J. E. Cole, of the Cork, Asbestos and Fibrous Glass Division, who briefly reviewed the Selective Service problem confronting the industry. About the first of March, the various departments of the Government were set up as certifying agencies, and lists of men between the ages of 18-30 were submitted to whichever certifying agency the company chose, a number of persons were certified, and then the papers were returned to the local draft boards. Most of the members of this industry went to the Navy Department for certification. The fundamental basis of persons to be certified is 30 per cent of the total in the United States, which does not necessarily mean that each plant will have 30 per cent of its people certified.

The committee members discussed the conditions in their individual plants in detail and in each instance it was stated that production would be reduced if employees were lost. It was pointed out that the asbestos textiles industry is an integrated industry and that the loss of one or two key men might result in the loss of several more somewhere else along the line. It was felt that women are being employed in as many positions as practicable in most of the plants. Mr. Cole indicated that most plants had done better than could be expected in increasing or maintaining cloth, yarn, and tape production which indicated that there had been some successful transfer of labor.

The suggestion was made that another Flying Squadron, organized for the same purpose and operating in the same manner as the one last year, be sent out to visit the various asbestos textile plants throughout the country to boost the morale of the workers, and re-emphasize the importance of asbestos textiles to the war effort. All the plants previously visited reported excellent response to the last Flying Squadron, but it was felt that another one would be beneficial.

The members of the armed services present at the meeting were questioned about the future of the asbestos textile industry after VE-Day. It was generally agreed that equipment to be out back would have no relation to the asbestos industry. Lt. G. O. Wilson, USNR, said the B-29 program increases until July, and then will level off and carry on through 1946. Lt. K. G. Pearson, USNR, said that all requirements would remain constant. Captain E. C. Jasper, Army, said there would be some outback in the Army program, but not affecting the asbestos textile industry.

Captain E. C. Jasper reminded the Committee that an unsuccessful attempt had been made last year to get the asbestos textile program on the "Must" list. The members of the committee felt that another attempt should be made at this time, and that even though unsuccessful it would benefit the industry by calling some attention to the urgency of its program.

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The question was raised as to why the classification of workers varied throughout the industry, and at this point the meeting was turned over to Mr. Oliver Schoonmaker of War Manpower Commission. Mr. Schoonmaker said that there is a need for 1,500,000 men up through August, not taking into account VE-Day. These can be supplied by returning veterans, people coming of age, outbacks in munitions industries, et cetera, however, there is still a balance of 350,000 people needed which have to be obtained from less essential industries. The National Production Executive Committee (PEC) has delegated its authority to the local Area Production Urgency Committees (APUC). Each area is served by an APUC, and this committee lists industries in order of importance to the war effort. The chairman of the committee is connected with War Production Board, Navy Department, et cetera, through whom a picture can be presented to the APUC. Mr. Schoonmaker said that if this industry could get on the "Must" list it would get certain attention it would not get otherwise, since they rate the men, and determine which of the seven bands a plant is in. The Manpower Priorities Committee has no power to get priorities higher than those set by APUC. The industry was urged to put their problems in front of these committees who are anxious to give them the assistance they need. It was emphasized that the manpower policy is decentralized and the local area is the place to go for help.

In connection with the rating of plants in one of the seven bands, the question was raised as to the interpretation of the expression "behind schedule". According to the War Manpower Commission this is interpreted to mean behind stated requirements of the claimant agencies.

Mr. Cole and Mr. Maloy expressed their desire to help the industry members as much as possible in presenting their cases to local committees, and felt they could give valuable assistance inasmuch as the people in Washington understand the essentiality of asbestos textiles better than the field offices. It was suggested that they be kept informed constantly of any new developments, so that contacts may be made from this Division to expedite desired action. It was noted by Mr. Cole that the only means the local boards have of learning of the urgency of the asbestos textile program, outside of personal contacts, is through the Critical Products List, "Must" Program, and the War Manpower Commission list of essential industries. At the present time a Production Urgency Report is being prepared to be sent to local boards, and to request assistance for these industries. These critical products reports change monthly.

Reconversion was briefly discussed by Mr. Cole. Reconversion in the asbestos industry is not too much of a problem because civilian requirements can be put into production immediately.

PRODUCTION

Mr. R. H. Coultrap of the Cork, Asbestos and Fibrous Glass Division presented a comparison of the overall production figures for the last three quarters. In the third quarter of 1944 about 14-1/2 million pounds of textiles were produced, a little over 5 million of which were cable filler and roving, leaving a net of 9-1/2 million pounds of textiles. In the fourth quarter Navy cable dropped to slightly under 4 million pounds, leaving 10 million pounds net of textiles. In the first quarter of 1945 the total poundage was 11-1/2 million pounds of textiles. Due to Navy cable outback which reduced this

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production to approximately one-half million pounds, net production of other textiles was a little over 11 million pounds. Requirements have remained about the same throughout this period, taking into consideration the loss of about 1-1/2 million pounds in Navy cable. The textile program is being hurt by missed shipments on allocations. Shipments not made in January were 4.8 per cent of allocations, and in February 5.6 per cent of allocations. While these percentages seem negligible, it is to be emphasized that nearly all missed shipments have occurred in four programs which are very tight: Pratt and Whitney, General Electric, Quartermaster, and Navy lagging cloth.

One industry member informed the committee that he has recently submitted a substitute material for use on the Pratt and Whitney engine fin separators. As yet no report has been received on this material which is Underwriters grade, square weave, 10 ply cloth as against the 14 ply cloth now required. It was felt by the committee that if 10 ply cloth could be used, the industry would be able to find more companies willing to supply it. However, even with the use of this substitute material requirements could not be completely met. Lt. Wilson, USNR, said that upon notification by War Production Board, the Navy would be willing to test the substitute cloth and push its use. He informed the committee that before the requirements were presented thirty different types of cloth had been tried and at that time 14 cut cloth seemed the most satisfactory. In this application temperature is not so much a controlling factor as a cloth with the ability to resist great stress and strain is required.

It was decided that the General Electric program, while not getting their full requirements, is getting enough to carry on. The same is true of the Navy lagging cloth program. One committee member objected to shipping cloth to naval depots, and indicated that a large proportion of missed shipments could be attributed to this. It was pointed out by Mr. Coultrap that the Navy had assured the Cork, Asbestos and Fibrous Glass Division that such a shipping order was no absolute indication that the material was going into stock.

Captain E. C. Jasper, Army, stated that requirements for the Quartermaster asbestos glove program would increase in July, and increase again in December, although there has as yet been no notice in writing to this effect. These gloves are made of 10 cut plain weave cloth of which there is not a sufficient supply. It was pointed out by Captain Jasper that Quartermaster is the procuring agency for all the services on asbestos gloves which explains why the requirements are so high. The question was raised as to why it is possible to purchase asbestos gloves in considerable quantity in department stores. Mr. Cole promised to investigate this sale of civilian gloves. It was felt that all asbestos gloves should be eliminated except military.

The industry members of the committee were questioned about any excess capacity to spin yarn which might exist. All members agreed that there was excess weaving capacity, but production could not be increased without more manpower and additional spinning equipment. It was decided that it would be necessary to screen allocations more closely in order to take care of critical programs.

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Mr. Meloy asked how the combination fibrous glass and asbestos cloth was making out, and all the industry committee members were enthusiastic in their reports. The only production problem in connection with this cloth has been when shipments of glass have fallen down. It was felt that this material has increased postwar prospects.

RAW MATERIAL

Mr. Meloy reviewed the asbestos fibre supply situation, which has remained unchanged since the first of the year. The Canadian miners had their quarterly meeting recently and estimated that production would be about the same as previously. They are up to schedule and anticipate being able to make up production lost during winter months. On the whole, the supply situation seems to be in good shape.

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