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REPORT OF TRIP TO HELSINKI, FINLAND TO ATTEND AND PRESENT A PAPER AT THE INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON SAFETY AND HEALTH IN SHIP BUILDING AND SHIP REPAIRING. AUGUST 30 to SEPTEMBER 4, 1971.

The symposium was sponsored jointly by the Finnish Government, The Institute of Occupational Health, and the International Labor Office (I.L.O. United Nations Group). Participants were from Belgium, West and East Germany, Bulgaria, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, France, Holland, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Of a total of almost 200 participants, most were either physicians, industrial hygenists, or engineers. Some of the better known participants are as follows: Professor Leo Noro, M.D., Director General National Board of Health, Finland; Professor M. J. Karvonen, M. D., PhD., Director Institute of Occupational Health, Finland; Dr. J. Lepoutre, M. D., Medical Director of S. A. Eternit, Belgium; Mr. Carl Lindell, Canada; Mr. Ivan Sabourin, Canada; Dr. A. Grut, M.D., Medical Inspector for Department of Labor in Denmark; Mr. W. Johnsen, Manager, Dansk Eternit-Fabrik A/S, Denmark; Dr. Fritz Blanz, Director of Training, Institute of Occupational Health, Finland; Mr. A. Palomäki, Paraisten Kalkki Oy, Finland; Mr. Bo Sandberg, Director, Paraisten Kalkki Oy, Finland; Dr. P. Sumari, M. D., Deputy Chief, Institute of Occupational Health, Finland; Mr. A. A. Cross, Director of Environmental Control, Cape Asbestos Company, LTD., London, England; Dr. Steve Holmes, Turner Brothers Asbestos Company, LTD., P.O. Box 40, Rochdale, England; Mr. Douglas Wright, Marketing Manager, Scandura LTD., BBA Group, Yorkshire, England; Mr. J. Leroy Balzer, Utah Mining and Construction Company, San Francisco, California;

Commander Sam Barboo, U. S. Navy, Washington D. C.; Mr. Duncan Holaday, U. S. Public Health Service, Salt Lake City, Utah; Commander George Lawton, M. D., U. S. Navy, Washington D.C.; Dr. W. J. Nicholson, Mount Sinai; Dr. Irving J. Selikoff, Mount Sinai School of Medicine.

Several interesting papers were presented. Irving J. Selikoff presented two papers. His first dealt with the same familiar data on the Asbestos workers in the New York and New Jersey unions. He added a new twist in that he related some of the Patterson, New Jersey, data on the Unarco Plant. By adding this data, dealing with Amosite only, he was able to draw the conclusion that Amosite must take its place with Crocidolite and Crystotile as an equally hazardous material.

Selikoff's second paper was a series of dramatic extrapolations. He started with the U. S. Department of Labor figures of workers in the United States shipyards during World War II. These figures were broken down by job description, age, sex, etc. A projection was made stating the numbers of people that would shortly die of Asbestosis, Bronchiogenic Cancer, and Mesothelioma.

Both of Irving's papers were presented in his usual dramatic style. If the tone of questionning which followed was any indication, Irving has not yet convinced all his medical colleagues in Europe that the panic button should be pushed.

W. J. Nicholson presented a paper on T.L.V.'s. This was a rather disjointed reworking of the controversial article which appeared in "The Green Sheet." Bill took several shots at the British standards. Both Steve Holmes and Alex Cross were rather quick with rebuttle.

My own presentation went rather well. Some were rather surprised to hear that control methods for the safe handling of Asbestos products are readily available to the construction trades.

Two speakers, Dr. O. Haglind, Medical Director of A.B. Götaverken Shipyards, Göteborg, Sweden, and Mr. M. Sundstedt,

Safety Engineer, of the same firm, both strongly advocated the complete substitution for Asbestos-containing materials. Mr. Sundstedt listed and displayed a number of possible substitute products. Most of the material was rock wool in some form. Both stated their yard will not be using any Asbestos after January 1, 1972.

Commander G. M. Laughton, M.D., USN, gave a review of the old Navy records. George did say he and the Bureau of Medicine were doing some epidemological studies with Navy shipyard personnel.

Commander S. H. Barboo, USN, gave an excellent paper on conditions and methods of control in the U. S. Naval shipyards. Sam repeatedly stated that the Navy favored proper control methods for products of known hazards rather than uncontrolled use of substitute products whose health effects are unknown. In private discussions with Sam, he stated the Navy design engineers were not going to risk poor performance by the use of ill conceived substitutes.

In both public and private discussions most participants seemed to feel that substitutions of Asbestos-free material should be considered only when the material represents a significant improvement in health conditions and the material meets recognized performance standards.

Mr. A. A. Cross, Director of Environmental Control, Cape Asbestos, presented an interesting paper on control devices in the construction industry. Alex had before and after fiber counts for a number of devices and products. Sooner or later, I believe, J-M must start accumulating this data to demonstrate conclusively that our products can be used safely.

Mr. Leroy Balzer, Utah Mining and Construction, reported on a laboratory method of testing construction materials for health hazards. The test setup is very similar to the one I had proposed initially for the I.I.H.R.P. A totally enclosed room where construction tools and methods can be tested. Before and after counts are more reliable when this method is used. Leroy gave dust figures on P.P.G.'s

new Asbestos-free Calcium Silicate block and pipe covering. The fiber count is low but the dust count is very high.

Early on the morning of September 1, Dr. P. Sumari, Chief of Medicine and Deputy Chief of the Institute of Occupational Health, and Mr. Eero Siltanen, Director of the Department of Industrial Hygiene, gave me a tour of the Industrial Hygiene Test and Analysis Laboratory. For the most part, they used the latest methods for industrial hygiene evaluation. The institute uses several methods which we may be able to use in our Industrial Hygiene Engineering Service.

The Institute of Occupational Health is a profit making organization but has the backing of the Finnish Government for 20% of its operating costs. It appears to be a very large and rather well run operation.

Later on September 1, Messrs. B. Sandberg and A. Palomäki hosted a tour through the Muijala Asbestos Cement Board Plant (wet method) of Paraisten Kalkki Oy. I was able to view their entire operation and reviewed in some detail the report of the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health on environmental conditions in their plant. The fiber used is 80% Russian Crystotile, 20% Canadian Crystotile, most from Flintkote. The Russian fiber is packed in jute bags--unlined. This is a relatively new plant and the environmental control is good.

On September 2, 1971, these same men arranged for a meeting with Mr. Rolf Söderström, Technical Manager, and a tour of the Anthophyllite mines at Paakkila. The nearest towns are Joensun and Kuopio, and are both about 350 miles from Helsinki. Paakkila is an open pit operation and the fiber is removed from so called "geological potatoes." The nearby mill leaves much to be desired from an environmental control view.

September 3 and 4 were spent touring the shipyards at Rauma, Turku, and Helsinki. The Valmet Oy in Helsinki, the Rauma Repola Oy and the Wärtsilä Oy yards in Turku were all visited. The work practices and environmental problems are rather

similar to those used in the United States. A rather startling fact is that the Finnish yards use chipboard and plywood for bulkheads in crews' quarters and top side control rooms. A burned out ship was in for repair and the gutted portion was again being outfitted with chipboard and plywood. The Finnish yards build few ships for American or British registry. Most of the ships are built for China or Russia or home use.

On September 5, 1971, I left Helsinki for Copenhagen, where later in the week I met with Kroyer-Superfos representatives to discuss their new Pryolytic process for destruction of solid wastes. This meeting will be the subject of a separate report.

If the reader wishes more detail on the content of this report, please contact the writer.

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