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Judgment against General Electric

Three Roane couples get $177,500 in chemical spill

Three couples in Kingston have been awarded a total of $177,500 by the jury in a suit for $300,000 filed by the six persons following damages to their property and their health when chemicals from a huge transformer being hauled to Detroit was dumped near Kingston after a leak developed in March, 1973.

The jury verdict was returned in Federal Court in Knoxville on Monday night. General Electric Company was the defendant against whom th e damages were assessed.

Ralph Hickey, and his wife were awarded a total of $90,000; his son, Hugh Hickey and wife, Thelma, were awarded $12,500; and Mr. and Mrs. George Galyon were awarded a total of $60,000.

The chemical, polychlorinated biphenls or commonly known as PCB, was dumped on property alongside Highway 58 just south of Kingston and subsequently General Electric spent a half million dollars in a gigantic earth moving operation in which hundreds of tons of the ground around the area was sealed up in 30-gallon drums and shipped to New York for "scientific burial."

Mr. Hickey said the contamination aggraved his health and caused him to lose his livestock. It was reported the water supply in the area was contaminated. The Hickey's moved from their home for a period of time while the earth moving operation was underway.

The Hickey son, Hughy who lived nearby, also reported damage to his property as a result of the contamination. Some of the chemical allegedly was splashed onto

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$177,500 awarded in chemical spill

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the face of George Galyon.

Defendants in the $300,000 suit filed by the three couples included GE, Monsanto Chemical Co., Moss Trucking Co., and driver Larry Pressley. All but the GE were dismissed from the suit.

The huge transformer was being transported from Rome, Ga., to Detroit, Mich., by the Moss Trucking Co. of Charlotte, N.C., with Pressley as the driver, when the leakage occurred.

The breakdown on the damages awarded included the following: $630,000 to Mr. Hickey for property damage and $35,000 for bodily injury; $15,000 to Mrs. Hickey for property damage and $5000 for injuries and loss of services; $12,500 to Hugh Hickey and wife, Thelma, for property damage; $70,000 to George Galyon for injuries and $10,000 to Mrs. Galyon for injuries and loss of service.

PCB is used as a coolant in transformers. It is also used as a lubricant, in waterproofing chemicals and in carbonless duplicating paper. Monsanto has stopped selling the powerful chemical to any firms except those who use it in "closed systems" such as transformers.

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