AN ANALYSIS OF
~~COMMENTS ON~~ THE PCB ARTICLE IN BUSINESS WEEK - DRB - 9/3/76...

1a. BW: "For the first time, PCBs...have been pinpointed as the cause of several industrial cancer deaths...Mobil says two of the deaths are attributal to PCBs."

1b. The following is what Mobil actually said in a story in the September 1, 1976 issue of Chemical Week: "The Company emphasized, however, that a link between PCBs and cancer had not been established."

2a. BW: "And is an unpublished study, Monsanto Co., the sole U.S. producer of the chemicals, reports that an abnormally high number of its deceased workers had died of lung cancer."

2b. The above information was editorialized from a statement lifted out of context during a 30 plus minute interview with the Washington Bureau of BW, last Tuesday afternoon. The use of the word, "unpublished," while technically correct, infers something tantamount to a devious coverup when in fact the study is "unpublished" because it is not yet complete. The fact that Monsanto was willing to discuss preliminary findings, in raw form, is anthing but a coverup! The use of the description, "abnormally high," when the exact figures were given to the reporter, ie., 7 vs 2.7, seems to me like Business Week went out of its way to create the impression or inference that it was much higher.

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To use this raw information without giving it proper scientific or medical qualifications is exactly what Monsanto's medical director cautioned against doing, ie., making a final assessment without all the facts! For example, Dr. Roush said: 1. The findings are preliminary; it is a small sample; it has not been age-corrected, we need to reconstruct the smoking habits; hope to identify their prior and post Monsanto work experience and exposure, will compare rate against that for the East St. Louis area; three of the seven workers who died, had worked in the unit for less than three months; what is needed now is a controlled study of the lung cancers.

It is also inconceivable to Monsanto that Business Week would come to us, saying, something like, "In view of Mobil's study, what has Monsanto found in studies with its workers?" -- Be told specifically that we looked at a worker population over four times as large and found no cases of either malignant melanoma or pancreatic cancer -- and then not use one word of this information, which any reasonable person would agree, "Does cast strong doubt that the findings of the Mobil study were in fact related to PCB," as Monsanto said.

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3a. BW: "The Environmental Protection Agency has found PCBs in mothers' milk in tests in 10 states."

3b. Both the Associated Press and United Press International, in similar stories carrying an August 30, 1976 dateline, said that reports that PCBs were found in samples of mothers' milk in 10 states are still preliminary and not supported by the agency responsible for the tests. This refutation of the earlier Washington Post article (which presumablly was the source of the BW statement) was attributed to George Wirth, an official of the Environmental Protection Agency. Wirth was also quoted in the wire stories as refusing to confirm figures in the Washington Post report. He also stated that the EPA was not ready to say that they have found PCB in mothers' milk.

These wire service accounts, which amount to refutation of the earlier story, were specifically pointed out to the Business Week reporter during the telephone interview last Tuesday by Monsanto, so he was aware of them in time to correct the draft of the article.

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