JOPLIN - FIBERS & MINERALS DIVISION MAY 17, 1965

CONFIDENTIAL

C.G. Morgan
Cincinnati - Fibers & Minerals

RE: Continuation of Membership in National Insulation Manufacturers Association (NIMA)

Dear Jerry:

In view of the fact that I am not aware of the direction that your sales efforts will be taking in future months, it is hard to give some sort of projection for our continuation of membership in NIMA. So, instead of trying to foretell the future, it may be helpful to enlarge upon my recent past experience with the Research & Technical Committee.

The Research & Technical Committee of NIMA is a product of the American characteristic for having someone else do an essential job, but one which no one particular person wants to undertake. Since 1952, the various Government agencies have given up every effort on their part to write specifications covering the characteristics of the insulation used in government support projects based upon their own test results. In contrast to an earlier day, the Bureau of Standards is not active, nor is the Naval Engineering Experiment Station at Annapolis. In spite of this lack of their own testing facilities, Government policy dictates that specifications should be written. To fill this void, the Government specification writers are completely dependent upon industry to supply them with general information and even in some cases to provide the information for important policy decisions.

In order to prevent the charge of collusion, Government specification writers try to avoid contact with only a few companies and foster efforts through trade associations. As a result of this expressed government policy, NIMA has become the spokesman for the insulation industry. All Military Specifications, Federal Specifications, Coast Guard Specifications, Guide Specifications for the Application of Insulations in the Navy, Bureau of Yards and Docks, General Service Administration & Maritime Commission are reviewed by the T & R Committee of NIMA and in some cases these specifications are actually written in the T & R Committee meetings.

This same circumstance has developed in the mechanics of operation for Committee C-16, ASTM. Since ASTM is a voluntary organization with no paid help on the Committee level, the work is carried on at the initiative of the individual members. Some of the large companies could afford this sort of work, but the smaller companies with limited staff and representation cannot afford to do so. As a result, most specifications and test procedures are now being written by the various trade associations such as NIMA, the Insulation Board Institute, the Vermiculite Association, the Perlite Institute, and the National Mineral Wool Association. For all practical purposes, the consumers and the general interest members contribute nothing except to act as a "brake" to prevent domination of ASTM by a given manufacturer.

This same pattern is repeated in the organization of the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers, (ASHRAE) who publish the Guide and Data Book, the two reference books that are kept current at all times. The chapters in the Guide and Data Book, covering insulation properties and the application of insulation, theoretically are written by members of ASHRAE; but in actual practice, the sources for their information come from NIMA and other industry associations.

Probably the most successful activity of NIMA has been this continuous, technically oriented contact of the association secretary with those people involved in the above activities. Individual companies outside the association have a small voice if they are in opposition to the stand of NIMA, though companies within the association do take individual stands at times and can be heard by the above referred to organizations.

It has been argued in the past, within the Fibers & Minerals Division, that the amount of sales to Government agencies is quite small and does not justify an attempt to influence their purchases through interest in Government specifications. The influence of Government specifications are way beyond the purchasing policies of the agencies. Military specifications and Federal Specifications influence consumer specifications of general industry. This is particularly true of the Federal Specifications. The larger engineering firms doing Government work become to believe that application specifications suitable for government work may have value for their own needs. In the late thirties and during the war years, Owens-Corning concentrated upon obtaining Government approval for Fiberglas, a new material at that time. The trade introduction of calcium silicate block and pipe covering was greatly aided by the government specification work done by the manufacturers of Kaylo. We, ourselves, are trying to follow this same path in a modest way with the effort being made in connection with Superglas #1800 Board.

The above describes in general terms the position of NIMA within the insulation industry. Specific examples of Eagle-Picher's relationship to NIMA's Technical & Research Committee may be of interest. My view of Eagle-Picher's participation is almost entirely a defensive one. If we were outside the association, we would have a very small voice; but within the associatinn and in conjunction with my activity in ASTM, I believe that we have the strongest position possible for the money spent. During the last year, several instances come to mind:

1. An attempt was made to change the definition of "mineral fiber" to include asbestos fiber. This change in definition was a proposal for an ASTM specification. If it had been accepted, we would now be forced to compete with asbestos based products for those applications calling for One-Cote Cement. Through a simple change in an ASTM definition, the coverage of MIL-C-2908A, Cement, Finishing Insulation, Federal Specification HH-I-500, Insulating Cements, Thermal, and ASTM Specification C-449, Mineral Fiber Hydraulic-Setting Thermal Insulating and Finishing Cement, would have been broadened to include a cement that is based primarily upon asbestos fibers instead of the current intention to restrict this specification to those of the One-Cote Cement type (Competition from a new source we do not need!) So far, this move has been defeated in the meetings of NIMA and never reached the meetings of ASTM.

2. The elimination of materials such as Super "66" and One-Cote Cement for application to pipe fittings, and the use of prefabricated fittings made from pipe covering instead, was made in the General Services Administration, "Standard Specifications for Thermal Insulations of Piping, Ducts and Related Equipment". Because I did not attend every T & R Committee meeting in 1964, the NIMA took a stand for the elimination of cements. Upon receipt of a NIMA letter outlining the NIMA stand to GSA, I voiced a protest in a letter, dated June 25, to NIMA and GSA. In September of 1964, the NIMA position was reversed; and GSA accepted the revised stand so that insulating cements can still be used where they always have been used.

3. Work through NIMA has extended the ASTM Specification C-392, Mineral Fiber Block or Board Thermal Insulations for Elevated Temperatures to include our MT-Boards. At the present time, this ASTM specification is the only specification covering this type of product.

4. For a long time, the definition "mineral fiber" has included all products made from "rock, slag, or glass". In a recent ASHRAE proposal for a table in the 1966 Guide, a distinction between "glass" fibers and those made from "rock or slag" was to be made. From a thermal performance point of view, the matter being covered in the ASHRAE table has no difference; therefore, this distinction should not be made and the effort was defeated.

A good example of the power of NIMA can be found in the conspicuous lack of success that Philip-Carey has experienced in obtaining Military, Federal, or ASTM Specifications that apply to Careytemp block and pipe covering. Though these products have been on the market for better than five years, the first specification for the above has still to be written. Philip-Carey is not a member of NIMA. One excuse generally used by the Government specification writers and also voiced in ASTM councils is that Careytemp is the only product of its kind, that it is the only one based upon expanded silica or perlite. Government specification writers and ASTM officials say that a specification should not be written for a product made by only one manufacturer. This official stand cannot be accepted, as Foamglass and Unabestos is made by only one manufacturer; yet each is covered in Military, Federal, and ASTM specifications, and their unique position is not even considered. On the other hand, Pittsburgh-Corning has been a most active member of NIMA since the time of its formation; and Union Asbestos & Rubber Company, the former manufacturer of Unabestos, was active in industry groups for a long time.

One hates to pay "protection" money, but I do not see how we can maintain our position by taking an independent course.

Paul L. Losse

PLL/lp

cc: J.W. Hudson
H.L. Huelster