

WOMEN'S WEAR ONLY - APR 12, 1971

Doctors Say Asbestos in Coats Is No Hazard

By JOAN KRAMER
WASHINGTON (FNS) — Five medical experts told the Food and Drug Administration here that the percentage of asbestos fibers

in a representative sampling of women's coats does not present an "imminent hazard."

The committee, asked by FDA to evaluate the potential hazard to June 6, concluded: "The levels of airborne asbestos in women's coats were substantially lower than levels permitted by occupational health and safety standards."

The report, which has not yet been released, came on the same day that the American Public Health Association was charging FDA with "failing for nine weeks to take action on the cancer-causing potential of 200,000 women's coats manufactured with an asbestos-containing fabric" (WWD, May 4).

Dr. Irving Selikoff, an authority of the dangers of asbestos at the Mt. Sinai School of Medicine, notified the Government on April 16 that an asbestos-containing fabric with cancer-causing potential was being used in the manufacture of women's coats.

Asbestos fibers have been linked with abnormally high rates of lung cancer, gastro-intestinal cancer and mesothelioma, cancer of the lining of the chest or abdomen, in asbestos workers.

Selikoff's tests showed that brushing out the coats increased the asbestos level in the air by 10,000 times.

The evaluating committee, selected by the medical advisor in FDA's Bureau of Product Safety, was chaired by Dr. George W. Wright of St. Luke's Hospital in

Cleveland and composed of four Mds and a PhD. Selikoff was not on the committee.

While the committee has ruled out seizure under "imminent hazard," fabrics with asbestos in them.

PLAINTIFF'S EXHIBIT

CAP-1650