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PLAINTIFF'S EXHIBIT 1633(4)

Merck Mtng Report Oct 10-12

REPORT OF SPECIAL TASK FORCE ON JOINT TREATMENT COMPOUND

This is the first report on the proceedings and status of the work being done by the Special Committee on Asbestos in Joint Compound. As you will recall, a recommendation was made to the Gypsum Association that it involve itself in the assessment of release of asbestos fibers during the use of the joint treatment products by the customer. This recommendation was based on the stringent regulations of the Occupational Safety and Health Act. At the annual meeting, all committees and the Board supported a basic program and funds were appropriated to conduct a field test program to determine what level of asbestos fibers are released in mixing and sanding operations when using joint compound products. It was further stipulated that an independent laboratory would serve to monitor this type of program in order to minimize cost due to duplicate individual efforts by the membership.

In May of this year, representatives from the Gypsum Association met with OSHA representatives in Washington to discuss regulations pertaining to asbestos. The two purposes for this meeting were (1) a hope to obtain an interpretation of the law which would preclude the need for placing labels on containers of joint compound if the asbestos fiber environment generated during its normal use would not exceed the OSHA limits, and (2) a variance from the regulations which would eliminate the need for the contractor to provide monitoring at each job site. Although OSHA was impressed with our interest in our consumers use of the product, they verbally denied any general relief from either the labeling or the monitoring requirement.

Subsequent to the meeting with OSHA, a special Association committee was formed from member designates who were skilled in air sampling techniques and evaluations. This committee formulated a test program and selected George D. Clayton and Associates as the independent laboratory to do the monitoring for the test. The actual test work was conducted by Gardineer Drywall Company, Aurora, Colorado, and they provided excellent cooperation in order that the monitoring of dust and asbestos fibers could be evaluated.

Ten dry powder and ready mix topping grade joint compounds from five manufacturers were delivered to the site by the Association members. Containers were unmarked except for a code number assigned by the Association's confidential depository. Ten test houses, in close proximity to each other and of relatively comparable size were designated for the test program. One product was assigned for each house for the mixing and sanding procedures.

The mixing tests required about 15 minutes per product and the sanding required an average of one hour per house; sanding was accomplished in a manner typical of flat work.

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1633(5)

Although a final report has not been submitted by Clayton, there was a special committee meeting held October 3 and a discussion of preliminary results indicated that there might be some area of inconsistency or incompletion of data obtained from this test program. The Committee recommends that certain portions of this program be redone to assure the Association that results which are to be published in the final report are accurate, complete and consistent.

The Phase II program has already been established and the Committee is ready to proceed. It is estimated that this phase will cost no more than $2,000 and it is requested that the Board of Directors approve such expenditures. If funds are appropriated, Phase II can complete their work and submit a comprehensive report of findings and recommendations by the end of January 1974. It is not possible as of now to predict if additional testing will be required after Phase II.

Respectfully submitted,

J. Volk, Jr.

Joseph Volk, Chairman
Special Committee on
Joint Compounds

November 1973