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December 13, 1977

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Covered 12-14-77
From M O Varner
Copied for: K.W. Nelson

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DHS
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PLAINTIFF'S EXHIBIT

ASA-519

Cynthia Robinson (NIOSH) reported that the IARC Monograph (Vol. 14, 1977, p. 80) presents evidence which shows that all forms of asbestos have been shown to be carcinogenic. She also claimed that seven cases of mesothelioma have now been found in Canadian chrysotile miners. She reported the latest findings on the current NIOSH study of mortality patterns among asbestos workers. A rate of 1.9 cases of mesothelioma per 10,000 asbestos

Dr. M. Kuschner (Stonybrook University) served as a discussant and provided one of the few objective criticisms of the NIOSH and Selikoff-controlled studies. He questioned, "Is it fair to use the total mortality figures for the U.S. as a control group?" He cited the lack of low level dose response in all the asbestos carcinogenesis testing as convincing evidence of a threshold level for carcinogens. He criticized the results (excessive lung cancer deaths) of the epidemiological studies reported during the conference as "overly simplistic" in that carcinogenesis is actually a multifactorial process and can occur only in a damaged lung, in that cigarette smoke must irreparably damage the lung before cancer can be caused by excessive occupational exposure. He also noted that pleural plaques are invariably associated with excessive exposure to asbestos by most researchers; however, if this is so, "Why do those with the least exposure get the greater amounts of pleural plaques?" In support of this thesis, he cited a study control population without any known asbestos exposure which was rated to have 30 percent pleural plaques.

Some minor controversy erupted over talc, beryllium, fiberglass, etc. but the extent of debate and discussion was limited. At the end of the conference, Dr. Wagoner chastised the industry representatives for not speaking out more in the sessions, and instead, taking their case to specific individuals out in the foyer. Considering the heavy-handed manner in which the proceedings were run, this criticism was wholly unwarranted.

These proceedings clearly indicate that the CPSC intends to ban as many asbestos-containing products as is possible, that OSHA intends to tightly regulate asbestos (all forms) as a Class I carcinogen, that EPA will soon be issuing national emission and air quality standards for asbestos and that FDA and MESA fully intend to further tighten regulatory controls for asbestos as well. They appear to be using asbestos to get their "team-work act together."

Lowell D. White

Lowell D. White, Ph.D.
Environmental Scientist

LDW/bjs

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