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TURNER BROTHERS ASBESTOS COMPANY LTD.

cc of Origin	To
Mr. G. T. H.	M. A. G. AMP 20 CHURCH

Your Ref: 68/200

16th February, 1967.

Thank you for your memo of the 26th January. I have now seen Mr. A. J. Elmes at I.C.I. Billingham. His official position is Head of the Non-Metallic Materials Section of the I.C.I. Tees-side Materials Group, whose function is to test and evaluate, approve and recommend all non-metallic materials which are used in any of the I.C.I. plants on Tees-side.

He advised that they had conducted an investigation into the use of asbestos insulation materials at the instigation of their medical advisors and the conclusions which they had now reached were that where it is technically or economically feasible, insulation materials which do not contain asbestos should be used. Mr. Elmes stressed that there was no ban on the use of asbestos and they will continue to use it wherever circumstances demand but as you suggest in your letter they will also continue to search for alternatives, particularly for use on new plant and in new buildings where they will endeavour to achieve asbestos-free areas. One of the main reasons for this is that whilst their medical advisors consider the present precautions which they take when handling asbestos materials (i.e. the wearing of masks and the issue of free overalls, which are laundered by the Company) to be satisfactory, these apply only to lagging personnel and whilst a job is in progress there are almost invariably other tradesmen or process workers in the vicinity who do not have this protection and to provide it in respect of the whole of the staff of the plant would not be feasible.

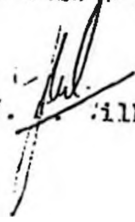
Mr. Elmes confirmed the information given by Darlington Insulation Co. that the usage of asbestos cloth on insulation work at any of the I.C.I. plants is small, consisting mainly of expansion joints in the hard setting and mattresses. As regards the latter, I.C.I., in pursuance of their policy, endeavour to use, where possible, the wired type of mattress with mineral wool or glass fibre filling with possibly glass cloth on the outer surface. Where the temperature does not permit this they use aluminised asbestos cloth.

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It is apparent that a fair portion of the asbestos cloth purchased by I.C.I. is used for purposes other than insulation and Mr. Allen's section have not yet investigated these. They are, however, very interested in the work which we are doing to produce cloths which will give a considerably reduced dust emission and as soon as we have any information in this respect they would like to be shown it.

To summarise I.C.I.'s attitude towards the use of asbestos materials therefore I would say that they are not unreasonably prejudiced in that they appreciate that where proper precautions are taken the risk can be virtually eliminated. These precautions however can prove both expensive and cumbersome so that where there is a viable alternative which eliminates the need for them and at the same time removes any suspicion of danger - then they will use it.

I take it thatitty & Wyatt are aware of the potential for aluminised asbestos cloth, would you wish them to pursue the matter of glass cloth with I.C.I. or is this a product which should be handled direct?

J.  Wilkinson.