Research & Engineering Center
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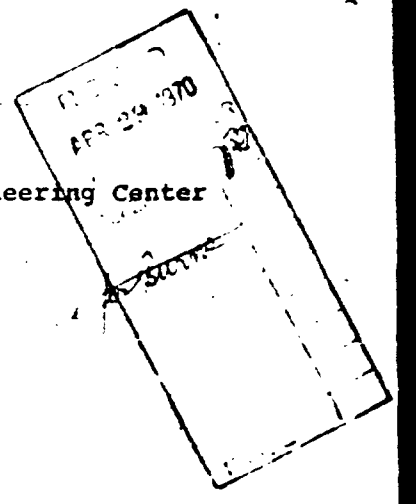

J. P. Leineweber

Asbestos Fiber Content of Beer

As part of a final gasp to clarify the question of asbestos fiber content of "beer", I have agreed to supply Mr. Heron of Turner Brothers with additional samples of the material filtered from Schlitz beer.

Would you please filter approximately 10 gal of beer, and after reserving your own samples, supply Mr. Heron with samples of (a) ashed material, and (b) non-ashed material on the membrane filter paper. We would like to have, if possible, about 10 μg of fiber on a single 25 mm filter so that the material can be evaluated by X-rays.

I will write up in more detail the gist of my discussions with TBA, but in essence they are attempting to utilize X-ray techniques rather than counting realizing the potential error due to the identity of the main lines in the serpentine and chrysotile patterns. They can detect 1 μg of chrysotile in an otherwise amorphous field.

If our count on a sample is approximately 10 μg and theirs considerably less than 1 μg (because of the still unexplained discrepancy between our counting methods) then their ability or inability to detect the chrysotile by X-rays might be a go-no go indication of who is correct. This would be a crude, but probably effective, way to indicate which of the counting techniques is giving the more probably correct value.

One of the questions which Rickards raised was the possibility of contaminating the sample with fiber during preparation of the sample. Would you please prepare a sample, starting with "pure distilled water" and going through the normal routine to determine

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whether you observe any significant amount of fiber. In addition to the normal preparation technique, will you please permit your sample to stay in the Microscopic Laboratory exposed to as poor housekeeping conditions as you can imagine in that area for approximately one day during the preparation of the sample and see if this has any effect.

As soon as you have these samples, or if there are any questions, please advise me.

S. Speil

SS/rs