

H. C. - Here is the reply to your letter.
209
Sandy:-

Dear Mr. Brown:

I am familiar with the July 1941 issue of THE ASBESTOS WORKER ~~that you sent me~~, and I am glad to give you details about the situation which has resulted in the resolutions to which you call my attention.

As you know, glass wool manufactured by Owens-Corning Fiberglas Corporation has made considerable progress as an industrial insulation material within the last few years. There is reason to believe that as Fiberglas has been winning an increasingly large share of this market in competition principally with 85 per cent magnesia, rock wool, and asbestos products, vested interests that have had a virtual monopoly in this market for some fifty years have stimulated the Asbestos Workers Union to discriminate against glass wool by demanding prohibitive wage rates in certain areas. This position is supported by nebulous assertions on the part of the Asbestos Workers that handling glass wool endangers their health. Stories about union members who have been hospitalized as a consequence of handling glass wool are difficult to trace, belong in the realm of hearsay evidence, ^{and} ~~are, in fact, entirely unsupported~~ ^{and} ~~unsubstantiated~~ ^{and} ~~unreported~~ ^{and} ~~undocumented~~.

I enclose a brochure entitled "Health Aspects of Fiberglas Materials" which reproduces on the inside of the front cover a letter dated June 17, 1941, from a Claims Referee of the Industrial Commission of Ohio verifying the fact that no claim for workers' compensation based on an occupational disease attributable to Fiberglas has ever been validated. This is

significant because thousands of Fiberglas production workers in Newark, Ohio, have been exposed to it over a period of years. The rest of the booklet provides other documentary evidence that gives Fiberglas materials a clean bill of health. Significant especially are the recapitulation and conclusions of an exhaustive report dated June 28, 1941, made by Dr. Walter J. Siebert, St. Louis pathologist, for St. Louis Local No. 1 of the Asbestos Workers Union, in which Dr. Siebert says: "The conclusion that the manufacture, fabrication, and application of Fiberglas products is accompanied or attended by no unusual occupational hazard is justified by the evidence." Dr. Siebert is director of laboratories in ~~St. Louis~~ five hospitals in the St. Louis area and is assistant professor of pathology on the faculty of the School of Medicine of Washington University.

Although members of the St. ~~Louis~~ ^{and a number of other} ~~Local~~ ^{Locals} now are applying Fiberglas without discrimination, largely as a result of the Siebert report, ~~which completely satisfied them that glass wool insulations are safe to handle, the situation is similar in other areas which are under the thumb of the Washington headquarters of the Union, where discrimination is being actively enforced.~~ ^{are demanding discrimination rates except in defense jobs, where they apparently fear a show-down with the Govt. - & perhaps because of the danger} ~~I offer the foregoing comments to acquaint you with the implications of this situation. Especially acute is the problem in the Atlantic Seaboard area and in the Southwest. Naturally we are doing our utmost to combat this situation, which presents a kind~~ ^{of} ~~of~~ "Have you stopped beating your wife?" ~~kind~~ proposition, and we are making ~~some~~ headway although we refuse to have any traffic with ~~the~~ union ~~representative~~ leadership ^{that} is disposed to handle questions of this sort in a racketeering sort of way.

4 Net of the whole thing is that our ~~insulating~~ pipe covering, metal mesh blankets, and other industrial insulations stand on their own merit as superior materials that are no more hazardous and no more uncomfortable to handle than other materials that have been on the market for many years. It is because they are making headway in the market that our competition has become alarmed, and although these relationships are hard to trace and difficult to prove, the growth of our sales and the suddenly developed hostility of the single organized labor group that applies ^{thermal} insulating materials strikes us as being much more than a coincidence.

~~It should happen to explain that~~

You may be sure that we have gone carefully into the subject ~~possibility~~ of occupational disease and that many years ago during the research and development stages we took steps to reassure ourselves about the health aspects of Fiberglas materials. For my part, I should wish to have nothing to do with a business that introduced to the market any products that raised uncontrollable or menacing health hazards. It was only after careful medical and scientific investigations by outstanding authorities gave our materials a clean bill of health that we brought them into production on a commercial scale.

I do not anticipate that you will encounter a situation of this nature in ~~some~~ of your operations because you are dealing with glass textile fibers that are much finer in diameter, ~~and~~ and therefore considerably less brash, than the glass ~~wool~~ wool fibers of which industrial insulations are made. In our own plants it is our experience that ~~from workers~~

the suggestions for normal body hygiene as set forth in the Fiberglas Standards F 4.2.1, copy of which is enclosed, there is no difficulty. Indeed, we are ~~just~~ proud of the fact that our employees, working in almost constant contact with Fiberglas and in rooms where particles of it might be in the air, have compiled an outstanding health record covering millions of man hours.

[I hope ~~these~~ these facts answer adequately the question that you have put to me, ~~about the health of our employees~~. If you need additional information, we shall be happy to supply it.

Sincerely,