

The first witness on May 2 was Rep. George Miller (D-CA). In his testimony, Miller devoted considerable effort to support his allegation of an industry "cover-up".

John A. McKinney, Chairman of the Board, Johns-Manville Corporation, testified on May 8 and responded to allegations previously leveled at industry. He reviewed "what was known when." McKinney said, "The greatest criticism that I have of the material which has been presented to you is the failure to mention the government's role with respect to asbestos and health." Dr. Paul Kotin, senior vice president for health, safety and environment, presented testimony on the medical aspects of asbestos and asbestos-related disease.

Further hearings on asbestos-worker compensation will be held in July in Long Beach, CA, and in Oct. in Providence, RI.

ASBESTOS IN SCHOOLS CONTINUES AS FOCUS OF ATTENTION

The Asbestos School Hazard Detection and Control Act of 1979, H.R. 3282 (1524) has been reported out by the House Education and Labor Committee at its May 1 session (N&N Apr.).

The controversial Sec. 5(e) was deleted, however, a new provision directs the U.S. Attorney General to conduct an investigation and report the results to the Congress, within one year of the Act's effective date, to determine whether "the U.S. should or could recover, from any person determined by the Attorney General to be liable for such costs, the amounts expended by the U.S. to carry out this Act." Language of current bill further directs the Attorney General to then proceed to recover the monies in this manner, if it is concluded by him that such action is appropriate.

In other developments concerning asbestos materials in schools, the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) filed suit on May 18 in U.S. District Court for District of Columbia in effort to force EPA to initiate immediate rulemaking for inspection and repair of asbestos materials in public schools. EDF believes EPA's voluntary program of technical assistance is ineffective. EPA had denied EDF's Dec. '78 petition for immediate rulemaking in a Federal Register notice dated Apr. 4 (N&N Apr.).

EDF attorney Jacqueline Warren stated "merely providing a technical guidance document does not give the EPA program credibility. The states lack leadership and direction, and do not feel compelled to comply with this voluntary effort."

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