THE U.S. GOVERNMENT has received formal notice from the government of Venezuela terminating the bilateral trade agreement between the two nations, It was in effect for more than 30 years and one of the few bilateral trade agreements not superseded by the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

The most significant effect will be in the duties applicable to U.S. imports, regardless of source, of residual fuel oils and petroleum crudes. Effective July 1, 1972, the import duty on heavier products will rise from 5.25¢ to 21¢ per barrel; the duty on lighter products (25 A.P.I. and more) will rise from 10.5¢ to 21¢ per barrel.

THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION (OSHA) regulation which restricted packaging of certain flammable liquids to one-pint or one-quart plastic or glass containers has been temporarily nullified through publication of a proposal in the February 23rd Federal Register to amend the regulation.

This action is in response to MCA's request and applies to Class 1A and 1B flammable liquids which are of high purity, corrosive or are packaged for export. Until the proposed amendment is resolved by OSHA, such liquids can be packaged in glass or plastic containers of any size.

However, the proposed amendment, if approved, would raise the maximum only to one-gallon containers. The Association has requested further revision, to permit use of certain plastic containers of up to five-gallon capacity in accordance with established practice.

On March 15 MCA commented on a labeling proposal for incorporation in the OSHA Standard for Exposure to Asbestos Dust, suggesting an expansion of the label language proposed by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health and deletion of the National Fire Protection Association's diamond symbol.

"Contrary to published reports, the material safety data sheet, known now as Form OSHA-20, is not required of any employers covered by the Williams-Steiger Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, except those in the ship repairing, shipbuilding and shipbreaking industries." This statement, excerpted from a U. S. Department of Labor news release USDL-72-192 of March 28, is attributed to George C. Guenther, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health.

Mr. Guenther states that OSHA is working to develop proposed standards applicable to all employers covered under the Act but will cooperate closely with the Department of Transportation and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health to insure that proposed standards will be compatible with those of other Federal agencies. *"Also,"* he said, *"because the technical requirements for a labeling and information system for hazardous materials are so complex, we will not issue final regulations without significant input from employers and employees."*

The news release concludes with a statement that *"the form to be developed for all employers is likely to be similar to the one now required of shipyard employers."* However, at a meeting at MCA offices on April 6 of MCA's technical inter-committee concerned with OSHA requirements for provision of product hazard information, an OSHA representative assured the group it is not, and will not be, OSHA's intent to issue a standard containing a general requirement for use of material safety data sheets. For certain selected materials OSHA may, at some future date, publish specific standards requiring provision of warning information which conceivably could include informational sheets of some type.

MCA member companies currently faced with unwarranted customer demands for material safety data sheets should refer them to the USDL press release. Further information can be obtained from:

U.S. Department of Labor
Occupational Safety and Health Administration
Office of Information
Washington, D. C. 20210
202/961/3914

AN INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION (ICC) investigation, Ex Parte 270 - Sub. 2, to ascertain the effectiveness of existing rules and regulations pertaining to railroad services prompted MCA to urge the Commission to establish:

Reasonable transit and handling time, and

Quality of performance requirements.

One of the most important aspects of railroad service is consistency of delivery time. To encourage it, the Association suggested that:

Service charges be imposed on carriers failing to meet minimum time schedules.

A standard car location reporting system be required to assist carriers and shippers in managing car movements.

In an ICC proceeding (#35435) dealing with trailer-on-flat-car rules and rates, MCA filed a statement supporting proposals of the eastern and southern railroads which would essentially eliminate the 60/40 mixture requirements and provide for uniform surcharge differentials for no-mix and single trailer shipments. Motor carriers of the affected regions have filed in opposition.

THE MCA opposed a 4% general increase proposed by tank truck carriers, primarily on the grounds that it is excessive and not consistent with guidelines of the Price Control Commission (the proposal is in addition to a 5% increase granted last December). Further, the Association contended that carriers have made no effort to reduce or maintain costs through more efficient operations, thus making the proposed increases unjustified.

ETC 14633

E-02333