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March 31, 1976

Subject: MEETING WITH JOHNSON & JOHNSON PERSONNEL AND THE
MT. SINAI SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

TO: FOR THE RECORD

On Monday, March 22, 1976, a meeting was held with Dr. Thomas C. Chalmers, President of the Mt. Sinai School of Medicine, Dr. S. D. Pomrinse of the Medical School, and Mr. Samuel Rovner, Director of Personnel Relations for Mt. Sinai. Johnson & Johnson was represented by Mr. D. D. Johnston, Mr. J.E. Burke, Dr. D. Petterson, Mr. L. Foster and Dr. G. Hildick-Smith. The object of the meeting was to review with the Mt. Sinai Medical School management the need for a statement from them correcting the record in the press to indicate that baby talc is safe, the samples of talc assayed by the Selikoff group were at least 3 years old and that nickel-containing talc was not a health hazard.

Initially, Dr. Chalmers, who had clearly given a lot of thought to the issue, suggested that it might be wisest if all parties forgot the whole incident and that nothing would be gained by obtaining a retraction from the Mt. Sinai Medical School. It was pointed out that a follow-up story in the media and press would have less impact than the initial story. Johnson & Johnson representatives however, clearly expressed their desire to have a retraction statement to not only allay the fears of many anxious parents but to correct the record concerning the safety of baby talc and the fact that Mr. Sinai scientists had failed to report that the samples studied were at least three years old.

The Mt. Sinai group indicated that over the weekend the Selikoff group had been studying 6 new samples of talc and had reported that all of them contained minimal amounts of asbestos. The Mt. Sinai management thought that this information should be in the retraction statement, but the Johnson & Johnson group assured the Mt. Sinai management that such a statement should be avoided in case the analysis by the Selikoff group was in error.

It was pointed out to the Mt. Sinai management that the Selikoff group had published in the papers about the presence of asbestos in talcs in 1971 and had been forced to retract their statement as it was erroneous. It was also pointed out that Dr. Langer was a co-author of a paper to be presented at the Edinburgh meeting in the fall of 1975 on the asbestos

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content of English and U. S. talcs but that Dr. Pooley, the co-author, had not presented the paper as the data developed by Pooley differed greatly from the Langer data in that the Pooley data showed only 4 talcs containing asbestos as opposed to 9 reported by Langer. The Mt. Sinai management professed not to be aware of the difference in the Pooley/Langer data and was somewhat surprised to see the information when it was presented to them.

A discussion took place concerning the content of a retraction statement. An agreement was reached on the content of such a statement. Dr. Chalmers indicated that he would write a covering note for this statement and that it would be released to the news media. The Mt. Sinai management reluctantly agreed to release a statement to correct the record on talc published in the news media. The meeting was an amicable one.



G. Hildick-Smith

GHS/tm