FILE NAME: Asbestos Sacks and Bags (ASB)

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Turner & Newall Limited
Board Meeting - 25th April 1968

Asbestos and Health - Progress Report
Quarter ended 31st March 1968

1. Statutory Regulations

Mr. J. M. Atkinson and Dr. S. Holmes of T.B.A. attended at the Ministry of Labour on 4th April to discuss the industry's comments (expressed in the Asbestosis Research Council's letter of 7th July 1967) on the preliminary draft Regulations. Useful progress was made. The Ministry is accepting several of the most important submissions of the A.R.C.

2. Literature

The Asbestos Information Committee pamphlet 'Asbestos - Safety and Control' and the confidential guard for asbestos industry Sales Representatives 'Putting the Case for Asbestos' have been published and circulated to all companies in the Group.

Publication is awaited daily of a report 'Hygiene Standards for Chrysotile Asbestos Dust' prepared by a Sub-Committee of the British Occupational Hygiene Society, and based largely on data accumulated over the years in T.B.A's Rochdale Factory. This is to be used as a guide by the Ministry of Labour in connection with the new Regulations.

3. Speakers Panel

The A.I.C. is building up a panel of speakers on asbestos who will be given proper training and briefing on health matters. A presentation was successfully given to an audience of Yorkshire plant engineers in Leeds by an A.I.C. panel on 13th March.

4. Press Relations and Advertising

The Central Office of Information film on asbestos is expected to be distributed in May.

Dr. A.F.L. Deeson was appointed by the A.I.C. as a retained medical journalist on an experimental basis for three months with effect from 1st March 1968, at a fee of £250 for the quarter plus a lineage of 30/-d. per hundred words published.

An unfortunate American report published here on the pollution of the air by asbestos from cars' braking was countered in several provincial newspapers by a letter from the Secretary of the A.I.C.

More press publicity can be expected on asbestos and health during and after a Conference on the subject which is being held in Dresden in the week of 22nd April.

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5. The Docks

The London dockers are still refusing to handle any sort of asbestos except in containers. The Asbestos Fibre Importers Committee and a representative of the A.I.C. are meeting soon to discuss a proposal that the Unions be approached afresh by the A.I.F.C. dock employers and shipowners regarding a programme of controlled trial shipments of asbestos fibre through London. Southampton, Hull and Liverpool are handling asbestos in press-packed bags wrapped and strapped on pallets. Newcastle, Glasgow, Manchester and Avonmouth are handling asbestos packed in impermeable bags without pallets. Smaller ports, with the exception of Leith and Grangemouth, will handle asbestos in impermeable bags, though sometimes at exorbitant rates. Crocidolite is being imported only in impermeable bags, wrapped and strapped on pallets.

Agreement has been reached between the Asbestosis Research Council and the A.F.I.C. on a draft Code of Practice for handling asbestos in the docks. Printing will proceed, but publication is to be deferred pending the result of the A.I.C.-A.F.I.C. meeting on the London situation.

6. Architecture and Building

When the British Occupational Hygiene Society Report has been published it should be possible to relate the findings of the A.R.C. Research Committee, who are sponsoring dust counts of occupied buildings, construction sites and, in due course, the urban atmosphere, to the B.O.H.S. Standards. If the results on the two former are favourable, they will be communicated to architects by direct mail.

Representatives of the asbestos industry who sit on Committees of the British Standards Institution have been asked to resist the incorporation in British Standards of prominent warnings on the dangers of inhaling asbestos dust.

7. Customers

A questionnaire has been circulated to the sales forces of member companies of the A.I.C. with a view to identifying the key health 'policy maker' in each of the nationalised undertakings and of 204 leading industrial companies. When the list is available the A.I.C. will consider calling a conference, probably in London in the Autumn, to be addressed by experts of the calibre of Dr. J. C. Gilson (Medical Research Council) on the following subjects: (a) Why Asbestos?, (b) The health risk in perspective, (c) Control of the risk, and (d) Industrial hygiene advisory services. This would follow the publication of the statutory draft of the new Asbestos Regulations.

8. Parliamentary

18 Members of Parliament attended a meeting at the House of Commons on 30th January at which an A.I.C.

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panel explained the asbestos industry's achievements and policy on asbestos and health and answered M.P's questions. The panel received a favourable reception and was impressed by the responsible and informed approach of the M.P's present.

9. Civil Service

It appears that two interdepartmental meetings have now taken place on asbestos and health, the Ministries represented being Labour, Health, Housing and Local Government and Board of Trade. We have hearsay evidence that the civil servants present expressed balanced views, though we still understand that the Factory Inspectorate are proposing to circulate a list of substitutes for asbestos. The Ministry of Housing and Local Government circulated various bodies and companies in the asbestos industry on 5th January regarding the Disposal of Asbestos Waste. Representatives of the A.I.C., A.R.C. and the Asbestos Association will in due course be invited to a meeting at the Ministry to discuss the contents of a questionnaire and the sample of the industry to whom it should be sent.

10. World Health Organisation

Dr. Holmes, Secretary of the A.R.C., visited Copenhagen at the beginning of January and met Dr. Aage Grut, Director of the Danish Department of Occupational Health, and Mr. Homann Pedersen of the Elsinore Shipyard, who had circulated a memorandum damaging to asbestos to the Association of Danish Shipbuilders. Mr. Pedersen has subsequently circulated an addendum to his original report, recommending (a) alternatives to asbestos, where possible, for insulation, and (b) a framing system for asbestos - based bulkheads which eliminates the necessity for screwing and drilling.

The A.I.C. have written to the Board of Trade drawing their attention to the damage which may be caused to the British asbestos industry's exports by irresponsible statements from officials of the World Health Organisation.

11. A.I.C. Expenses

The expenses of the A.I.C. for December 1967 and January and February 1968 were as follows :-

	£ s. d.
Hill & Knowlton staff time charges	3,282. 1. 8
Hill & Knowlton out-of-pocket expenses	509. 8.10
T.B.A.Co.Ltd. special expenses	60. 0. 0
	3,851.10. 6

The T.& N.Ltd. share of these expenses amounted to £2,188. 9. 4d.

JOHN WADDELL.