

Our most recent effort in this regard has been the preparation and printing of an Asbestos and Health Information File, which we have mailed to some 3,000 newspapers, magazines, trade publications, radio and TV stations, science writers, etc., across the United States.

Basically, the file contains copies of five industry position papers on asbestos and asbestos-health, as well as a number of important medical papers and a pair of photographs illustrating the benefits of asbestos and industry efforts at environmental control. While we don't expect our information file to change the whole attitude of the press toward asbestos, we are hoping that the media will make use of it to accurately report the industry's position when doing stories on the subject.

And now, having heard the bad side of the public relations problem, it's time for some good news.

And the good news is that despite all the negative articles on asbestos-health that have appeared in the press over the past half-dozen years, very few people have been paying attention. Let me explain.

In February, the Association undertook a personal interview research survey of the American public to determine its attitude toward asbestos and its awareness of the health issue. The survey was conducted by the Opinion Research Corporation during March and April. More than 2,000 demographically selected Americans were interviewed.

Without going into enormous detail, the results show that only 22 per cent of the American public are aware of the health hazards of asbestos, and that 80 per cent of these consider it a hazard only to those who are occupationally exposed. A mere three per cent of those interviewed stated that they considered asbestos a health hazard to the general public, and less than one quarter of one per cent considered it the most dangerous material on the list they were given to choose from. Surprisingly, the college age youths of America are no more aware of the hazards of asbestos than their parents and grandparents.

These results should be reassuring to those industry customers who fear that the general public will stop buying their products because they contain asbestos.

Before going on to describe our activities in the government relations area, I think it might be interesting at this point to take a very brief look at the manner in which Dr. Selikoff and his supporters have used his research results to dramatize and exaggerate the seriousness of the asbestos-health problem. I have two charts which point this out rather conclusively.