

CANCER

SOCIETY

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FOR RELEASE AFTER 12:00 NOON, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1971:

NEW YORK, NEW YORK: -- Two top scientists were joined by leading trade unionists today in announcing an unprecedented study of occupational and general exposure to chemical and physical agents that may play a role in causing cancer in man.

The announcement was made at a press conference held in connection with the American Cancer Society's annual meeting in the Waldorf-Astoria.

Dr. Irving J. Selikoff, Professor of Medicine and Director of the Environmental Sciences Laboratory of Mount Sinai School of Medicine, and Dr. E. Cuyler Hammond, American Cancer Society, Vice President for Epidemiology and Statistics, are co-directors of the investigation.

Participating with them at the press conference were the following trade union officials:

Alexander J. Rohan, President, International Printing Pressmen and Assistants' Union of North America; Albert E. Hutchinson, General President, International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Asbestos Workers; George H.R. Taylor, Executive Secretary, AFL-CIO Standing Committee on Safety and Occupational Health; Bertram A. Powers, President, New York Typographical Union No. 6.

The union leaders were spokesmen for a larger group of trade union officials who are on the Advisory Committee for the project.

The investigation is already underway in a number of unions,

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such as the Printing Pressmen's Union. Drs. Hammond and Selikoff noted that "Printing trades workers are exposed to carbon black, various dyes, and other substances which may be carcinogenic or co-carcinogenic."

From 1904 up to the present time, the pressmen's union has obtained a copy of the death certificate of every member who had died, the spokesman explained. They have kept complete records at quarterly intervals of each of their over 100,000 members, showing length of exposure and current type of work. The union has provided the scientists with copies of all records and through their affiliated locals they will trace all members, including those who resigned or transferred from the union since 1963. These records will enable the investigators to compute death rates by age, cause of death and specific type of work in the printing trade.

Drs. Selikoff and Hammond further pointed out:

"In our industrial society, vast numbers of people are slightly exposed to innumerable chemical and physical agents. Many people have moderately heavy occupational exposure to these same agents; and a small number have extremely heavy occupational exposure. This applies, for example, to such agents as asbestos dust, talc (which contains asbestos), benzo-a-pyrene, carbon black, compound of sulphur, oxides of nitrogen, insecticides, some fertilizers, silicates, some dyes, radioactive material and various solvents."

The study will determine death rates from cancer of various sites among those who have had prolonged exposure to various chemical and

physical substances. Drs. Hammond and Selikoff said: "Priority will be given to groups exposed to agents now under suspicion as possible carcinogenic (cancer-causing) or co-carcinogenic agents -- and agents to which the general public is somewhat exposed.

Dr. Umberto Saffiotti, Associate Director for Carcinogenesis of the National Cancer Institute, has offered the assistance of his department in helping to select substances "on the basis of presently available epidemiological and experimental evidence on carcinogenesis."

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health estimates that 50,000,000 American Industrial workers are exposed to dust, fumes, vapors, chemicals or radio-active materials. Drs. Selikoff and Hammond stressed the search for both negative and positive findings, seeking exposures which show no hazards as well as those that do.

While seeking the effects of occupational exposure to various agents the study will also determine "whether the same agents result in an increase in cancer rates among people with non-occupational exposure."

Dr. Selikoff said that one such study is already underway. He found an extremely high cancer death rate (bronchial carcinoma and mesothelioma) among workers at an asbestos plant in Paterson, New Jersey. Since people living within a radius of half a mile down wind from the plant were also exposed to asbestos dust, Drs. Selikoff and Hammond reported: "We are now tracing these people to determine whether relatively light non-occupational exposure to asbestos dust results in an increased risk of cancer."

The investigation in the unions concerning industrial exposure

will be greatly facilitated by the simultaneous resumption of the American Cancer Society's Cancer Prevention Study in which over 1,000,000 men and women were enrolled by some 68,000 volunteers of ACS, in 29 Divisions (25 states).

Drs. Hammond and Selikoff noted that union officials and members had come to them because of their concern about possible exposure to substances that may be harmful. Animal experiments have shown that certain types of exposure to DDT, chemicals, asbestos and other substances have produced cancers in animals.

The unions have offered complete cooperation in assuring the conduct of a most thorough and objective investigation, the scientists emphasized.

The scientists pointed out that one of the substances under suspicion is carbon black. About half of each automobile tire consists of this material, with two billion pounds a year going into tires.

The study is being financed by the American Cancer Society.

The members of the union advisory committee, participating as individuals are the following:

Lawrence J. Ahern, International Chemical Workers Union; Charles D. Aquadro, United Slate, Tile and Composition Roofers, Damp and Water-proof Workers' Association; Edward D. Burke, Patrolmen's Benevolent Association; William Casamo, International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Mill Workers; Donald H. Coleman, Local 756 International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America; Gerald Coleman, United Hatters, Cap and Millinery Workers' International; Edward Cross, Compressed Air and Free Air Shaft, Tunnel,

Foundation, Caisson, Subway, Cofferdam, Sewer Construction Workers;
Leo Goodman, International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and
Agriculture Implement Workers of America; Andrew T. Haas, International
Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Asbestos Workers; Samuel
Hirsch, Joint Industry Board of the Painting and Decorating Industry;
William G. Hoffman, International Union of Electrical, Radio and
Machine Workers; Constance Kopelow, Amalgamated Clothing
Workers of America; Albert Lannon, International Longshoremen's and
Warehousemen's Union; Joseph Leonard, International Longshoremen's
Association; William Martin, International Printing Pressmen and
Assistant's Union; John T. Maye, Patrolmen's Benevolent Association;
Anthony Mazzocchi, Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union;
John McGowan, (formerly of United Rubber Workers); Jacob J. Novak,
International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Asbestos
Workers, Local 12; William Cross, United Rubber Workers International
Union; John J. Pecoraro, International Brotherhood of Painters and
Allied Trades of America; George Perkel, Textile Workers Union of
America; Paul E. Schremp, Director of Safety and Health Department,
United Steelworkers of America; Marshall A. Smith, United Papermaker
and Paperworkers; Thomas W. Smith, International Printing Pressmen
and Assistant's Union of North America; Marco D. Vestich, United Steel-
workers of America; Joseph Ugrovitch, United Rubber, Cork, Linoleum
and Plastic Workers of America; Jack A. Waller, International Associa-
tion of Fire Fighters; Frank Wallick, International Union, United
Automobile, Aerospace and Agriculture Implement Workers of America;
John B. Weiser, Textile Workers Union of America; Michael Wood,

International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders, Blacksmiths, Forgers and Helpers; Richard H. Davis, Allied and Technical Workers, District 50; T.R. Means, Allied and Technical Workers, District 50; Mike Ryan, Teamsters Local Union No. 688; Henoeh Mendelsund, New York Cloak Joint Board; Frank Schonfeld, District Council No. 9, Brotherhood of Painters and Allied Trades; Jack R. Suarez, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America; Sheldon Samuels, Industrial Union Department, AFL-CIO.

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