

want to make moral and political and social judgments on their assignments and then take sides. Never mind getting the facts straight."

As a result of this "industry is a monster" philosophy, asbestos will remain a hot news item only so long as the news is bad. The "good" that asbestos does in protecting lives and property is of no concern to the press. Likewise, industry efforts to protect workmen and the general public from asbestos exposure will always be given minimal coverage, since such information is directly contrary to the portrait of an irresponsible industry producing a "killer" product that is the sole element of news worthiness in the asbestos story.

The press relations battle will therefore be won, not when the media starts to print positive or balanced articles about asbestos, but when the press ceases to print anything about asbestos at all. As long as negative news on asbestos-health continues to be generated, the media will continue to eat it up. The media will only cease to carry such stories when the generation of negative news ceases. It is as simple as that. Positive or balanced stories are a chimera, since they are, by definition, not newsworthy.

Let me give you a very specific example of this last principle in action. As most of you already know, the Association is currently engaged in an extensive campaign to interest the trade press in articles on the benefits of asbestos and on industry accomplishments in the environmental control area. The trade press, unlike the national or public media, is much more receptive to articles of this nature and we expect to be seeing a number of positive stories in the trade press in the next few months.

In any case, we also from time to time put out press releases on various subjects relating to asbestos-health. A few weeks ago, we issued a release on the report of the advisory committee on asbestos cancers of the World Health Organization. In brief, the report concluded that the general public is not in danger from asbestos in the environment. Thus far, we have received nearly two dozen press clippings from trade publications that carried the story. To the best of our knowledge, not a single newspaper, news magazine, radio or TV station, or any other segment of the public media ran the story, with the solitary exception of a French language paper in Toronto. As I said before, if the news is good, the press simply isn't interested.

Nonetheless, the Association has no intention of abandoning our efforts vis-a-vis the national media. We will continue to issue appropriate press releases, cooperate with feature writers doing stories on asbestos, write letters to the editor when those stories appear, and in short, do all we can to present the press with a balanced view of the asbestos-health situation.