

The Commissioner

December 26, 1973

Through: The Deputy Commissioner

Director, Bureau of Foods US/ Virgil O. Wodicka DEC 28 1973

Director, Office of Technology

Visit of Johnson and Johnson officials with the Commissioner scheduled for January 16, 1974 - INFORMATION MEMORANDUMPURPOSE

This memorandum furnishes background information concerning Johnson and Johnson's request to visit the Commissioner to discuss asbestos in talc. (Tab A).

TEXT OF THE INFORMATION

For the past two years the Food and Drug Administration has been carrying out investigations to determine the presence of asbestos in talc that is used in cosmetics. Most of our analytical work on cosmetic talc has been done through a contract with Professor Levin, Chemistry Department of New York University. In a period of over a year Professor Levin analyzed 193 samples of commercial cosmetic talc products by x-ray diffraction methods. The Johnson and Johnson people and others in the cosmetic industry, along with some talc suppliers, have participated with the Bureau of Foods in discussing various testing methods to determine the presence of talc.

Johnson and Johnson of course has as one of their major line products-- Baby Talcum Powder. They were vitally concerned that the methods of analysis were correct and sound, and that we got no false positives in the detection of asbestos in their talcum powders. Two of the Johnson and Johnson talcs (Levin samples 84 and 131) were suspected by Dr. Levin of containing asbestos but these were not confirmed by other analysts using confirmatory methods.

Through this whole investigation Johnson and Johnson have used their own research manpower and many consultants. In fact, in one meeting that we had with them, 16 technical people from United States and Europe presented a seminar covering analytical methods, toxicology, and mining technology. As far as we know, Johnson and Johnson is the only company that has its own talc mines.

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When the Johnson and Johnson officials visit you, they may mention some of the methods. I therefore thought that you would want to be informed ahead of time. (Tab B)

Robert H. Scheffner, Ph.D.

Enclosures

Tab A - Letter from Johnson and Johnson

Tab B - Letter to Johnson and Johnson