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### Preface: Toxicity of Monomer and Combustion Products

A. Guyot<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> CNRS Laboratoire des Matériaux Organiques, Lyon, France

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## **Preface: Toxicity of Monomer and Combustion Products**

A. GUYOT

CNRS  
Laboratoire des Matériaux Organiques  
Lyon, France

During the last few years, the use of PVC has aroused questions owing to environment problems. Two major concerns are the toxicity of the monomer, which may lead to liver cancer and eventually to death, and the formation of toxic products in fires involving plastic building materials. A special session of this Second International Symposium on PVC, sponsored by both IUPAC and the French CNRS, is therefore devoted to these problems.

A special panel discussion was organized on the problem of monomer toxicity and Dr. Thomas (Rhone-Poulenc, France), Dr. Stafford (ICI, United Kingdom) and Dr. Praefke (Wacker Chemie, West Germany) explained how the problems had been studied, defined, and solved from the point of view of either the residual monomer in the fabrics or the level of monomer in the atmosphere of the plants working with monomer production or polymerization. The main session was meant to study the combustion. The chemical aspects were reviewed by Dr. O'Mara, the main lecturer (B. F. Goodrich, USA) as well as the problem of smoke production, also discussed by Dr. Lecomte (University of Liege, Belgium) and Dr. Delfosse (University of Lille, France). Dr. Wooley (Fire Research Station, Borehamwood, U. K.) discussed the fire test on a large scale, together with Prof. Smith (Queen Mary College, London, U. K.) and Prof. Einhorn (Fire Research Center, University of Utah, U. S. A.

gave a very impressive talk about the problem of smoke toxicity although Dr. Jouany (University of Chatenay, France) showed how water may be used as a protection against HCl evolution. Obviously much remains to be done to solve combustion problems, although PVC is an auto-extinguishing polymer, but the field is very active now.