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California Zonolite Co.

PROCESSORS AND DISTRIBUTORS OF VERMICULITE

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PLANTS AND OFFICES
LOS ANGELES
SAN FRANCISCO
SACRAMENTO

November 4, 1960

Mr. Max F. Corse
Western Mineral Products Co.
1720 Madison St. N. E.
Minneapolis 13, Minnesota

Dear Max:

I am writing this to you since I know you have at least one plant with a stoner that is processing Libby ore. We have an operating problem on our stoners which we installed in early August, as follows: On the one furnace unit which runs primarily No. 3, all of our No. 4 production and all of our No. 1, we find that the perforated deck material (stainless steel) blinds very badly, especially after extended runs of No. 4 ore. The "blinding" is almost 100% in the upper area near the rock discharge point and at least 60% on the balance of the deck.

Although we have been inspecting these decks each shift and brushing them with a wire brush, the blinding still is severe. When we took the deck frame out last Saturday, we found this high degree of blinding and also that it cannot be removed by brushing from the upper side (material side), but has to be brushed on the air chest side. The blinding is caused by relatively long, thin particles of asbestos fibre - which occurs in all the sizes of Libby ore. These particles apparently get upended and pass through the holes far enough to become firmly lodged in place. Brushing the outside surface only, breaks off the upper portion of the particle, leaving the hole severely plugged. Further brushing does not remove the particles.

We are planning to order a spare deck and frame unit so that we can periodically remove one which is "blinded" and replace it with one which has been cleaned. With the new all metal unit, this only takes a few minutes to do - whereas cleaning the deck cloth from the underneath side is quite a job. It may even be necessary to remove the perforated metal deck from the frame in order to clean it thoroughly due to the rib supports, the cross framing, and the 3"-4" over-lapping section in the center. However, before doing this, I thought it best to check with you and others to see if there is a simpler answer to this problem. Very possibly, blinding to this degree does not occur with South Carolina ore as I don't believe there are the same "gangue" materials associated

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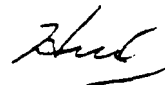
with the vermiculite. As in all cases, we have a noticeable amount of very fine rock - probably magnetite which actually passes through the deck without blinding it, and provisions have been made to trap it and bleed it off periodically. However, these pieces of asbestos are different, and from their size, I would suspect they come primarily from No. 4 ore and to some extent from No. 3. I say this because the second unit with identical equipment runs all of our No. 2 for acoustic and a limited amount of No. 3 - we have never run No. 4 on that furnace.

I might also ask if you have processed any amount of Water Repellent aggregate on a furnace equipped with a stoner - as there is an indication that the deck can be thoroughly coated and blinded by the asphalt emulsion if any extensive amount of this product is made. Do you find this to be the case, and what do you do to avoid the condition or relieve it?

Would like to hear from you on this, as it has become a definite maintenance problem with us. We make a good deal of 6 cu. ft. concrete aggregate in Gensburg bags (cloth) for one of our roof deck applicators. Prior to installing the stoners, we had several fires in the plant due to these bags charring and burning. We installed the stoners with the idea of reducing the product temperature sufficiently to avoid this potential fire danger. When the deck is new or newly cleaned, the cooling is adequate, but as it blinds up, the temperature becomes excessive and we have occasional fires. As a result, I surely need a good answer to the problem. Oddly enough, the temperature seldom is high enough to char the same product in a paper bag.

Let me know what your experience has been.

Best regards,



J. H. Maxley

JHM/ms

cc: A. E. Wise
Floyd Stewart
R. A. Bleich