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GRACE

Construction Products Division

To: J. W. Wolter

Date: May 21, 1981

From: R. E. Schneider

Subject: Proposed Visit to
Dammstoffwerk Willie Klein
Pfalz, Germanycc: P. Korenberg
W. R. Straker
D. D. Walczyk

In an effort to learn more in detail of the problems facing the Kleins in expanding the Libby concentrate received by them in 1980, I solicited contact information of P. Korenberg. I subsequently reached Mrs. Klein by telephone and discussed the equipment and operations with her for the better part of one hour.

It appears that the equipment utilized to expand vermiculite is essentially of Willie Klein's design and is patterned from a vertical Mandoval expander. It required a good deal of conversation, but, I finally was convinced that the Klein's do not separate the rock or any other material from the vermiculite. What is received, is placed in the bag.

The furnace was described as being of fire brick construction with an overall height of about 5 meters. The concentrate is fed at the top and descends through the unit over a series of tiers (not baffles) built into the brickwork of the unit. The burner has a capacity of 7 liter/19 min (assuming equivalent to our No. 2 fuel, this would make the heating capacity about 835000 BTU/hr or about half the heating capacity of our Model A furnace). The only air utilized is that of the combustion air. Product is collected at the base of the furnace and bagged. Gases are emitted at the top of the furnace unit. Temperature ranges 800-900° Celsius and are measured above and in the vicinity of the burner.

After considerable discussion of the equipment, Mrs. Klein asked why I was so interested in the equipment. When I told her that I wanted to gain as much information as possible before someone came to work with them on their furnaces and that understanding of the equipment being used was important, her reaction was surprising. She admitted that through put and yield were problems but she indicated the one problem of prime concern was how to sell the product with "asbestos" present.

I had been back pedaling for quite a few minutes at this point. I then simply ignored a direct answer on the sales problem and suggested that some considerable preparatory work was necessary and through discussion with her arrived at a tentative visit date during the week of June 22nd.

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As I discussed with you on the telephone the other evening, I see little that one can expect to do in a visit to the Klein operation. At any rate, who ever goes must be prepared in more areas than I was initially led to believe.

R. E. Schneider
(cc)

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RES/gm