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Port Hedland, 21/1/1964.

The Senior Inspector of Mines,
Mines Department,
Kalgoorlie, W.A.

re:- Australian Blue Asbestos Pty Ltd.- Wittenoom.

With reference to Asst District Inspector Lorton's report of 10th January on the ventilation survey made at Wittenoom during November - December 1963, I would like to raise one matter for some guidance.

Inspector Lorton has referred to the directive received from Sydney that all stope development work in the lower sections of the mine was to be curtailed for the time being. This type of head-office ruling has always presented to us our most difficult problem of achieving company co-operation. Too many plans which we have agreed to with the Mine Manager have later been abandoned by the command of some senior company official; and one to whom we have no direct access.

As this latest directive, if still in force, is contrary to the agreement you, myself, and the manager came to some time ago I suggest that on the occasion of my next visit to Wittenoom I leave instructions that no stopping of any description is to be attempted between the No.s 8 and 9 levels until the stopes drives in the particular area have been completed and can ensure a satisfactory supply of through ventilation.

My reasons for this instruction will be based upon the known toxic nature of the mine dust; the knowledge gained through past experience that high dust concentrations are always associated with those stopes into which secondary ventilation is, or should be, introduced; and as an additional safety measure in providing an alternative means of access.

Although Regn 149 does cover this aspect I consider that as it involves a question of ventilation, any challenge to my request should be directed through you as per Regs 136 & 137. On the other hand Regn 73 provides for such a decision to be made by the Minister presumably on the advice of an Inspector.

I would appreciate your comments on this matter.

DISTRICT INSPECTOR OF MINES, PORT HEDLAND.