

Heil June
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A.W.U. ASKS FOR DEPARTMENTAL INSPECTION AT WITTENOOM

Says Workers' Health Endangered by Dust in Asbestos Mill

FIBRE CAUSES POWER UNIT TO FAIL; MEN NOT COVERED BY COMPENSATION

THE MINING DIVISION OF THE AUSTRALIAN WORKERS' UNION HAS ASKED THE STATE MINING ENGINEER, MR. FURALL, TO MAKE AN INSPECTION OF THE MILL AT THE WITTENOOM GONGE ASBESTOS MINE IN THE HARTSHORN RANGES.

Announcing this yesterday, the secretary, Mr. C. Y. Oliver, said the union was concerned with the danger to the health of the workers. In the mill, a large power unit had broken down, and when the asbestos fibre was blown into the air.

Discussing conditions generally at Wittenoom, Mr. Oliver said that improvements were planned and there was plenty of water. However, ventilation was limited. Windows were provided for the staff, but the workers employed were housed in tents and huts. A sewerage was planned seven miles from the mine, but only one house had been built and several were under construction. Working conditions in the mine were fairly good, but the low level, which averaged only 3 ft. above mining conditions difficult.

Mr. Donat Coughlin, who had asked the State Mining Engineer, Mr. Furall, to make an inspection of plant conditions at Wittenoom. He said he was sure that the ventilation inspection, Mr. J. Lloyd, had made an inspection in June, very hot, but the union believed that at that time the mill was closed and under repair, and in this season that events could not be taken.

However, the union feels it is not necessary to have the mill in operation for a proper appreciation of the amount of dust created during milling operations. Mr. Oliver said, "everything about the mill is broken with a dust coating of dust."

A large power unit failed because the asbestos fibre was blown into the system and blocked the oil screen. I saw the

secret of this, and I feel it adequate machinery was used. The danger to health the mill workers are very real.

When the mill is operating, heavy clouds of dust drift through the plant, including the engine room, filling it up and above. The whole atmosphere about the plant is dust-laden. There is no doubt that the health of workers in this section is exposed to serious danger.

Mr. Oliver said the union considered a diesel locomotive being worked in dead ends underground as hazardous work.

He said the union also took strong exception to men being engaged in work at Wittenoom Camp, on the authority of a government certificate.

A government certificate, he said, was not protected by the Mining Act or by the State Workmen's Act.

The union thought that workers engaged in work should be kept out of the Perth Public Hospital. These facilities should be used by employees wherever they were.

Mr. Oliver said that when he was at Wittenoom Camp recently, 17 out of 17 men were employed on the authority of a government certificate.

PLAINTIFF'S
EXHIBIT
WV-04002

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