

FILE NAME: Colonial Sugar Refinery (CSR)

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Inspector of Mines with Inspection Results of Wittenoom

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Port Hedland 14th September '62

The State Mining Engineer,
Mines Department,
PERTH W.A.

re:- Australian Blue Ashcoke Pty Ltd. Wittenoom.

I carried out an inspection of the underground working places and throughout the milling sections of A.B.A. Pty Ltd on 12th and 13th September.

In my general report of 23th August I referred to the unsatisfactory working conditions as regards the purity of the underground and mill atmospheres, and I stated that I held an opinion that the advancement of underground working faces would tend to bring about a further deterioration in the purity of the mine atmosphere.

On the occasion of my recent visit I did find that alterations to the primary ventilating circuits had appeared to have improved conditions in the No.s 4 and 5 level stoping areas. The alterations have been effected by the erection of new doors and the removal of some old doors, plus an blitz on the correct usage of the ventilation doors generally. On the occasion of this inspection I only noted one ventilation door propped open - previously most doors were either left open or were damaged to some degree.

This aspect indicates better supervision and control on the main haulage and service levels, but in the stopes I still observed a very poor appreciation on the part of miners for the need to use ventilating equipment provided; for the need to try and alloy dust by adequately watering the face and immediate surroundings; or for the need to use sprays provided at the tipping position of scraper hoists.

There is a great turn-over of labour at Wittenoom and many of the miners have had little previous mining experience. It is quite noticeable that the majority do not appear to understand the reasons why the working faces and immediate surroundings must be watered down, and ventilating equipment used. As far as they are concerned, time spent in attending to these tasks does not earn them any money, and money is their only concern. Wittenoom will continue to have this large turn-over of labour and we must



accept the fact that there will be a majority of the underground work force who will make no attempt to minimise the amount of dust which mining operations can create.

No doubt the answer lies in the proper education of the miners, but the labour shortage has been such that miners are sent into stopes as soon as they show some aptitude to bore holes and fire them. We have always sought better control of mine dust and the lack of success in this regard prompts me to doubt the sincerity of the management in their efforts to comply with our requirements in the use of water to allay dust. It is well known that best recovery of fibre results from the treatment of dry ore, and our continual requests for sprays to be fitted, or repaired, or used, and for more water to be used on broken ore prior to scraping, must provide some basis for the above conclusion.

Some action has been taken in the mill to prevent the escape of dust from the tailings bin and surge bin. I made a request for better control of spillage from beneath the Symons cone crushers in the Secondary crushing section and in general the mill is being kept fairly well sealed. The problem of dust being exhausted from the Roto-clones still persists but this may ultimately disappear if the use of the nylon bag filters is adopted.

DISTRICT INSPECTOR OF MINES, PORT HEDLAND.