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(64)

Mines Department,
KALGOORLIE.
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State Mining Engineer,
Mines Department,
PERTH.

Ventilation - Australian Blue Asbestos Mine - Wittenoom

A visit was made to the asbestos mine operated by Australian Blue Asbestos Ltd. at Wittenoom, and underground workings and treatment plant inspected. The attached sheets give the tabulation of dust counts and temperature readings recorded.

In conjunction with the ventilation officer of the mine an air survey was completed and the accompanying plan gives direction and volume of air flow, temperature readings, and dust counts recorded in the air channels.

The following points engaged my attention and were discussed with the mine manager, Mr. Paul Thomas.

Underground:

A fair volume of air (17,560 c.f.m.) enters the mine through the South haulage adit on the upper seam but after flowing approximately 300 feet this volume diminishes to 11,560 c.f.m. and after another 400 ft. the initial volume is diminished to 6,250 c.f.m. - less than half the volume which enters the mine at this particular entrance. Brattices in poor condition and faulty stoppings allow this good air to escape through old workings and short circuit to the exhaust fan. Some of the doors used as stoppings and regulators to the flow of air are of poor construction, and warped considerably due to concussion from explosions during firing. Some doors need equipping with a self-closing device e.g. strong springs, especially noted was a door near the battery charging station. (Mr. Thomas in reply to this suggestion said that a self closing device had been fitted but had since disappeared and so tempted theft.)

In the lower seam 27,560 c.f.m. enters the mine and through main cross connections flows to the upper seam, thereby ventilating the workings on the north side. This air is exhausted by the main exhaust fan.

Intake air, [illegible] seam	11,560	c.f.m.
" " [illegible] seam	27,560	
Total Intake air	40,220	c.f.m.

[illegible] (the [illegible] mine)

[illegible] c.f.m.

PLAINTIFF'S EXHIBIT 10316.0

Venturi ducts and cloth were not suspended to the walls and in most cases were lying on the floor of the workings. Cloths were not up to the working face and in no case were they nearer than 15 ft. and this distance varied, being up to approximately 70 ft. in the No. 4 Drive on the Upper Seam.

The selection of the position of the electric fans, used in ventilating the working face in development ends, in some cases was poor. In the partic lar cases of the 2 L Drive the fan is ahead of an opening to the upper seam and thus causes the air to be recirculated.

The ventilating of stopes requires attention. The use of secondary mechanical ventilation is urged where one section of the stope is advanced more than 10 ft. past the general face of the stope.

Ventilation Officer:

At the time of my visit the surveyor was filling the position of ventilation officer. The appointment of a permanent officer is a necessity. Ventilation on this mine needs more supervision as evidenced by the incorrect selection of fan sites as instanced above. The recording of temperatures and action necessary when they are found to be too great, is of great importance, and if possible, dust samples should be taken. More supervision should be given by shift-bosses to the necessity for keeping venturi cloths up to the face, and the co-operation of the miners also obtained.

Treatment Plant:

By comparing the results of dust samples taken during this visit with those taken by Mr. Lloyd in September 1950, it will be seen that conditions have improved. The improvement is probably due to the installation of a Beaman dust collector (wet), and fans which exhaust to atmosphere above the mill building.

The area in the vicinity of the treatment plant appears very dusty and is probably due to the exhaust, from the fans in the plant, drifting down or being forced down by the wind. (The situation of the plant in respect to the walls of the gorge may cause the wind to bear down.) It was suggested that more lengths of ducts would carry the exhaust dust higher and in some cases eliminate the dust nuisance.

Changehouse:

Several samples of changeroom dust in use in Kalgoorlie were obtained and submitted to the mine superintendent. They were also sent information [illegible] supplied. [illegible] not to be the small [illegible] the number of men using the changeroom [illegible] The elimination of [illegible] problem.

Whilst boring, the machine miner endeavours not to bore in the fibre and thus he is subjected to very little attack by the fibre. The country rock surrounding the fibre is considered variously as a ferruginous dolerite or ferruginous sandstone, both of which rocks have a high silica content..

The high [illegible] measured at working places in the mine can be attributed mainly to two factors.

(1) The lack of the use of water on the walls, backs, and faces of working places, and on the broken dirt either left or being hauled.

(2) The neglect by miners to keep the venturi cloths up to the working places, and a lack of supervision in this matter.

It is felt that ventilation conditions generally would be improved by attention to the above matters. The greater use of water in the mine could be achieved if a process of fibre-drying was incorporated in the treatment plant.

Since my visit to the mine, the Senior Inspector of Mines has been advised that Mr. K. McMahon has been appointed Ventilation Officer attached to the company. It is hoped that this appointment will have the effect of improving supervision, and installation of ventilating appliances.

J.H. Baighney (and.)
[illegible] INSPECTOR OF MINES