Advocate Mines Internal Correspondence

To: R. E. Sampson - Asbestos Date: June 6, 1975

From: J. G. Cole - Advocate

Copies: File

Subject: C B C - "HERE & NOW" - June 5, 1975.

Advocate Mines is just 12 years old. It's an open pit asbestos mine,production over 70,000 tons a year. About 500 people work here and some of them are concerned about their health.

Martin Saunders - "People that first went to work in the mines there did not know the dangers of the asbestos dust and nobody was instructed as to the, the harmful affects it could have had upon you. Alot of the people that started to work there, especially in the Mill, ah, played with the dust as if they, if they would play in a, in a bale of hay, in the, in the hayloft, we call it a hayloft and ah, because of that the ah, this is what that really concerns me. Now there is young people going to work in there, and alot of younger people are probably not aware of it."

It takes from 15 to 20 years to see signs of asbestosis, but many people I spoke to who have been working there for twelve years and less are convinced they've already been hurt by the dust. This mountain of asbestos tailings is only two or three miles from town. The Company wouldn't let us on their property to shoot film so we went out on the water. It was a calm day, but when the wind blows tailings can be found 25 miles away.

I spoke to Lewis Jacobs who passed his medicals every year for twelve years until he went to British Columbia to work.

"I had a complete medical before I leave Baie Verte and everything was supposed to be ok. I went to BC February 3rd I believe it was. I had an x-ray and ah, on the 2nd of April I got a report from that x-ray, after two and a half months working, it says I was unfit for services, you got it right there."

It says here in the letter?

"Right."

Does that mean you had to leave your job there and come back home?

"Well they didn't put me off. They told me I could got in the Mill, but I consulted this man and he said no."

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He said you couldn't even go in the Mill?

"He said as far as he was concerned, I was finished with the Mine."

You mean that he thought you were in such bad shape that you were unfit to work?

"Well, he described my lungs as being scarred."

And did he say what this was from?

"Well he didn't give me no, no explanation whatever just said my lungs shows signs of changes and that I was unfit for service and for a certificate of fitness."

So you came home to Baie Verte then, and you've had medicals since then. Can you tell me what the results showed?

"They were there in St. John's. This claimed that I'm ok."

Miners and townspeople, both, say Baie Verte is well on the way to becoming another St. Lawrence. The Union wants stricter controls on dust levels and greater protection for workers in provincial legislation. As yet, respiratory disease at Advocate Mines is not recognized to be a problem.

Ann Budgell, CBC News, Baie Verte.

J. G. Cole - Advocate