TALK

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REPORT ON VISIT TO ADVOCATE MINE AT BAIE VERTE

ON SEPTEMBER 3 AND 4, JERRY CHASE AND I VISITED THE ADVOCATE LOCATION, TOURED THE MINE, THE MILL, THE WAREHOUSE AND DOCK AREA AS WELL AS THE LOCAL BAIE VERTE HOSPITAL. DURING OUR VISIT, JACK COLE, THE PLANT MANAGER, ARRANGED FOR US TO MEET WITH RON MERCER, THE ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEER; RON GOODMAN, THE RETIRING EMPLOYEE RELATIONS MANAGER; JOHN LAWRENCE, THE NEW EMPLOYEE RELATIONS MANAGER; AND DOUGLAS BLACK, M.D., PLANT PHYSICIAN. JOHN LAWRENCE ESCORTED US ON A TOUR OF THE FACILITIES, AND RON GOODMAN AND JERRY CHASE SPENT A GOOD DEAL OF TIME GOING OVER SPECIFIC RECORDS. THE INDIVIDUAL AREAS OF THE OPERATION ARE LISTED BELOW WITH COMMENTS.

OPEN PIT

FROM AN ENVIRONMENTAL POINT OF VIEW, THIS PIT IS IN GOOD CONDITION. THERE ARE COLLECTION DEVICES ON THE LARGE DRILLS, AND THE SMALLER SECONDARY DRILLS HAVE WATER SPRAYS. THE OPERATOR WORKS FROM A CLOSED CAB IN BOTH CASES. ALTHOUGH THE ROADWAYS WERE EXTREMELY MUDDY DUE TO RAIN DURING OUR VISIT AND COULD PRESENT A PROBLEM IN DRY WEATHER, A LARGE TANK TRUCK WAS IN EVIDENCE WHICH APPARENTLY IS USED DURING THESE DRY PERIODS.

PRIMARY CRUSHER

SINCE THERE ARE FEW PEOPLE (ONE OPERATOR AND ONE HELPER) AT THIS BUILDING, THE RISKS ARE MINIMIZED. HOUSEKEEPING IN THIS BUILDING WAS NOT UP TO STANDARD, AND I WOULD SUGGEST THAT AFTER ADDITIONAL MONITORING INSIDE THE OPERATOR'S BOOTH SOME FORM OF FILTERED AIR BE PROVIDED FOR HIS ENCLOSURE. THE LAST INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE TEST SHOWED A FIBER LEVEL OF 1.1 F/CC. WHILE THIS LEVEL IS WELL BELOW THE TLV, A RELATIVELY SMALL EFFORT COULD REDUCE THIS TO ALMOST ZERO.

SECONDARY CRUSHER

THE SECONDARY CRUSHER IS PERHAPS AMONG THE WORST AREAS AT THIS LOCATION. AGAIN, THE INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE FIBER COUNTS

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ONLY SHOW A HIGH OF 15 F/CC. THE HOUSEKEEPING IN THIS AREA IS EXTREMELY POOR. DUST ON THE STEEL WORK AND MACHINERY IS VERY MUCH IN EVIDENCE AND IN SOME CASES TO A DEPTH OF 8" OR 10". WHILE THE COUNTS ARE NOT EXCESSIVELY HIGH, HISTORICALLY THEY SHOW QUITE A VARIANCE. WITH THIS AMOUNT OF DUST ON THE EQUIPMENT, ONE WOULD SUSPECT THAT A DRY, SUNSHINY, WINDY DAY MIGHT PRODUCE LEVELS IN EXCESS OF 25 F/CC, WHEREAS A MUGGY, STILL DAY WOULD SHOW LEVELS A GOOD DEAL LESS. THE POINT HERE IS THAT BETTER HOUSEKEEPING WOULD IN ALL PROBABILITY REDUCE THESE GREAT FLUCTUATIONS IN COUNTS. THIS AREA SHOULD BE GIVEN ANOTHER INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE SURVEY AFTER THE PLANNED RENOVATION OF THE IMPACTOR AREA.

MILL

IT WAS RATHER EVIDENT THAT A GOOD DEAL OF TIME AND EFFORT HAD BEEN SPENT IN THE MILL JUST PRIOR TO OUR ARRIVAL TO CLEAN THE AREA. HERE AGAIN THE COUNTS ARE NOT EXCESSIVELY HIGH. ON THE LAST COUNT, THEY DID NOT EXCEED 10 F/CC. THE HOODINGS ON THE VARIOUS UNITS ARE NOT QUITE AS TIGHT AS THEY MIGHT BE (COMPARED TO MILLS 5 AND 6 AT JEFFREY). WHILE THE CONVEYORS ARE COVERED ON TOP, THERE ARE VERY FEW THAT HAVE THE PAN ON THE BOTTOM SIDE, THUS PERMITTING MATERIAL THAT HAS STUCK TO THE BELT TO BE CARRIED AROUND AND DUMPED INTO THE AIR AS THE BELT RETURNS. SOME ATTENTION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO IMPROVING THE HOODING AND FURTHER ENCLOSING THE CONVEYORS.

QUALITY CONTROL LABORATORY

HERE BOTH HOUSEKEEPING AND WORK PRACTICES LEFT MUCH TO BE DESIRED. WHILE SEVERAL STATIONS WERE EQUIPPED WITH DUST CONTROL HOODING, THE FACE VELOCITY APPEARED TO BE EXTREMELY LOW. MUCH FIBER WAS IN EVIDENCE ON THE BENCHES, CHAIRS, TABLES, FLOORS, ETC. THIS AREA CERTAINLY NEEDS ATTENTION IN THE HOUSEKEEPING, WORK PRACTICES, AND DUST CONTROL AREAS.

LUNCH ROOMS

WHILE THE COUNTS IN ALL OF THE LUNCH ROOMS WERE UNDER 2 F/CC, I BELIEVE THAT SOMETHING SHOULD BE DONE TO REDUCE THESE EXPOSURES TO AN EVEN LOWER LEVEL. SINCE THE LUNCH ROOMS ARE USED FOR COFFEE BREAKS AND LUNCH (FREE-TIME ACTIVITIES), THE ARGUMENT MAY WELL BE MADE THAT THESE LUNCH ROOMS SHOULD BE WELL BELOW THAT FOUND AT A WORK STATION. THE LUNCH ROOM COUNTS AT PRESENT APPROACH 1 F/CC; AND DEPENDING ON WIND, WEATHER AND OPEN WINDOWS, THE POTENTIAL FOR COUNTS A GOOD DEAL HIGHER IS VERY REAL.

LOCKER ROOMS

THE HOUSEKEEPING IN THE LOCKER ROOMS SHOULD BE IMPROVED, AND ADDITIONAL SPACE SHOULD BE DEVOTED TO THIS FUNCTION.

PROTECTIVE CLOTHING

THE PLANT SHOULD BE CONGRATULATED FOR THEIR FORWARD STEP IN PROVIDING LAUNDRY SERVICE FOR COVERALLS THAT ARE WORN THROUGHOUT THE PLANT.

RESPIRATORY PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

HERE AGAIN MANAGEMENT HAS DONE A GOOD JOB IN REQUIRING AND ENFORCING THE WEARING OF RESPIRATORY PROTECTION. AS I MENTIONED TO THE PLANT MANAGEMENT, I WOULD STRONGLY URGE THAT MORE ADEQUATE RESPIRATORY PROTECTIVE DEVICES BE SUPPLIED--THAT THE 3M MODEL 8710 BE SUBSTITUTED FOR THE CURRENTLY USED 3M 8500 SERIES RESPIRATOR. I BELIEVE THAT MORE EFFICIENT RESPIRATORY PROTECTION IS NEEDED, AND THE EFFICIENCY OF THE 8500 RUNS FROM 30-50%. THE EFFICIENCY OF THE 8710 APPROACHES THE HIGH 90'S.

HEARING PROTECTION

SINCE NOISE IS A RATHER CRITICAL PROBLEM THROUGHOUT THE OPERATION, HEARING PROTECTION SHOULD BE WORN IN THE SECONDARY CRUSHER, THE MILL, AND CERTAIN OTHER SELECTED AREAS. CURRENTLY, ADVOCATE IS USING HEARING PROTECTION THAT MUST BE RANKED AMONG THE BEST AVAILABLE, THAT IS THE CUSTOM-MOLDED EAR PLUGS SUCH AS MARKETED BY GENERAL ELECTRIC. MANAGEMENT MUST TAKE IMMEDIATE STEPS TO SEE THAT HEARING PROTECTION IS WORN IN MORE OF THE NEEDED AREAS, IN FACT IT SHOULD BE MADE MANDATORY IN SEVERAL OF THE BUILDINGS.

WAREHOUSE

THE WAREHOUSE AT DOCKSIDE IN GENERAL WAS WELL-MAINTAINED, CLEAN, AND WELL KEPT. THE PALLETS ARE STACKED RATHER HIGH AND MAY CONSTITUTE A SAFETY HAZARD DUE TO SETTLING AND SUBSEQUENT TUMBLING.

SHIPBOARD LOADING OPERATIONS

THE SHIPBOARD LOADING WAS DONE BY AN OUTSIDE STEVEDORING FIRM WITH WHOM WE CONTRACT WHEN A SHIP IS TO BE LOADED. THE LOADING

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PRESENTS SOME PROBLEMS IN THAT IN MOST CASES THE PALLETS THAT ARE SWUNG INTO THE HOLD MUST BE UNLOADED FROM THE PALLET AND STACKED IN TIGHT AREAS. BREAKAGE APPEARS MINIMAL, BUT THE UNLOADING OF THE SHIPS AT THEIR DESTINATIONS MUST BE A RATHER GREAT PROBLEM.

E&R SHOPS AND GARAGE

THE E&R SHOPS AND THE GARAGE WERE IN GOOD SHAPE, HOUSEKEEPING WAS KEPT UP, AND GENERALLY GOOD PRACTICES WERE IN EVIDENCE.

EFFLUENT FROM STACKS

THE EFFLUENT FROM THE DRYER STACKS IS VISIBLE FOR MANY MILES, AND PLANS ARE CURRENTLY UNDER WAY BY THE MANAGEMENT TO PUT IN COLLECTION DEVICES TO MINIMIZE OR ELIMINATE THIS PROBLEM. THE TIME TABLE PRESENTLY CALLS FOR 1978, ALTHOUGH IT WOULD BE MY RECOMMENDATION TO STEP UP THIS TIME TABLE SO THAT IT COULD BE DONE AT AN EARLIER DATE. JUST HOW LONG THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND THE CANADIAN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT WILL PERMIT SUCH GROSS DISCHARGES IS QUESTIONABLE.

TAILINGS

THE TAILINGS DISPOSAL METHODS ARE PERHAPS THE MOST TROUBLESOME AND VISIBLE PROBLEM AT THE ADVOCATE LOCATION. CURRENTLY A MOUNTAIN OF TAILINGS DUST, SOMEWHAT HIGHER THAN THE EXISTING SURROUNDING NATURAL MOUNTAINS, EXISTS. THE TAILINGS ARE CONVEYED BY CLOSED (BUT LEAKY) CONVEYORS ABOUT 1/2 - 3/4 MILES FROM THE MILL. EVEN ON A RAINY DAY, SUCH AS WE ENCOUNTERED, THE DUST AT THE DISCHARGE OF THE CONVEYOR IS VISIBLE FOR A GREAT DISTANCE. ALL OF THE EVERGREENS FOR A DISTANCE OF 1 1/2 TO 2 MILES FROM THE TAILINGS PILE ARE COVERED WITH WHITE ASBESTOS DUST, RESEMBLING SOMEWHAT A WINTER SNOW SCENE. AN APPROPRIATION HAS ALREADY BEEN APPROVED AND PLANS ARE BEING DRAWN TO INSTALL A PUG MILL WHICH SHOULD REDUCE THE DUSTY CONDITIONS ENCOUNTERED IN THE TAILINGS DISPOSAL. THERE ARE CURRENTLY TWO EMPLOYEES WHO WORK ON THE TAILINGS HEAP WITH AN OCCASIONAL MAINTENANCE MAN. I WOULD STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT THESE MEN AND ANY OTHER MEN WHO ENTER THE AREA WEAR RESPIRATORY PROTECTIVE DEVICES. THE MAN THAT I WITNESSED AT THE TAILINGS DUMP DURING THE VISIT WAS WEARING RESPIRATORY PROTECTION. IN THIS INSTANCE, MORE ADEQUATE RESPIRATORY PROTECTIVE DEVICES THAN THE FURNISHED 3M 8500 MUST BE USED. HERE IS ANOTHER INSTANCE WHERE IT IS JUST A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THE PROVINCIAL OR THE CANADIAN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT STEPS IN AND FORCES US TO MAKE DRASTIC CHANGES. I BELIEVE THAT THE PLANT IS WELL ADVISED IN THEIR CURRENT THINKING TO RATE THIS AS A HIGH PRIORITY ITEM FOR CORRECTION.

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WASTE WATER

CURRENTLY, ALL OF THE WASTE WATER FROM THE MINE IS CHANNELED THROUGH VERY SMALL SETTLING PONDS, THEN INTO THE BROOK, AND FROM THERE INTO THE SEA. IN THE AREA WHERE THIS WATER DISCHARGES INTO THE SEA, HANDS FULL OF ASBESTOS CAN BE RETRIEVED FROM THE WATER. THE GOVERNMENT IS CURRENTLY MONITORING THIS OUTFALL, AND IT APPEARS TO BE ONLY A MATTER OF TIME WHEN THEY WILL FORCE US TO TAKE CORRECTIVE ACTION.

ANOTHER PROBLEM WITH WATER IN THE BAIE VERTE AREA WAS POINTED OUT TO US BY DR. BLACK. HE SHOWED US A COPY OF A REPORT WHEREIN SIX WATER SAMPLES WERE TAKEN AROUND THE BAIE VERTE MINE AND TOWN INCLUDING ONE SAMPLE OF THE BAIE VERTE CITY WATER. THESE WERE SENT TO A LABORATORY IN ONTARIO, AND THE RESULTS INDICATED A RATHER HIGH LEVEL OF ASBESTOS FIBER. I CANNOT URGE TOO STRONGLY THAT WE TAKE IMMEDIATE STEPS TO CHECK THE VALIDITY OF THIS REPORT. I WOULD RECOMMEND THAT THE PLANT PEOPLE BE INSTRUCTED TO TAKE SAMPLES IN SIMILAR LOCATIONS TO THE ONES THAT WERE TAKEN FOR THE ABOVE-MENTIONED STUDY, AND IN ADDITION SECURE SAMPLES FROM VARIOUS OTHER PARTS OF THE ISLAND INCLUDING SOME SEVERAL HUNDRED MILES AWAY. THESE SAMPLES SHOULD THEN BE SENT TO R&D FOR THEIR ANALYSIS. WE SHOULD ATTEMPT TO FIND OUT WHETHER THESE HIGH LEVELS IN THE WATER ARE DUE TO POLLUTION BY THE ADVOCATE MINE OR BY THE ABUNDANCE OF SERPENTINE ROCK AND NATURALLY OCCURRING ASBESTOS. SINCE THAT EXISTING REPORT MAY WELL BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF SOME OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS, I WOULD RECOMMEND THAT WE PROCEED WITH A STUDY OF THIS KIND IMMEDIATELY.

BAIE VERTE HOSPITAL

DURING OUR VISIT WE HAD AMPLE TIME TO SPEND WITH DR. DOUGLAS BLACK, WHO IS IN CHARGE OF THE BAIE VERTE HOSPITAL AND WHO ALSO FUNCTIONS AS OUR PHYSICIAN AT THE ADVOCATE LOCATION. I BELIEVE WE ARE INDEED FORTUNATE TO HAVE A MAN OF DR. BLACK'S CALIBER AS OUR PHYSICIAN AT THIS LOCATION. HE HAS A VERY GOOD SETUP IN THE HOSPITAL. HE IS VERY CONSCIENTIOUS IN EVALUATING OUR EMPLOYEES AND IS JUST AS ANXIOUS AS WE ARE TO MAINTAIN THE HEALTH OF OUR EMPLOYEE POPULATION. THE RECORD KEEPING AT THE HOSPITAL SHOULD PROVIDE US WITH ANY NEEDED DATA FOR FUTURE HEALTH STUDIES OF THE BAIE VERTE, ADVOCATE POPULATION. CURRENTLY, ALL EMPLOYEES ARE X-RAYED ON AN ANNUAL BASIS. THE X-RAYS ARE SENT TO A GOVERNMENTAL AGENCY IN ST. JOHNS WHERE THEY ARE EVALUATED BY A RADIOLOGIST. THE FILMS ARE SUBSEQUENTLY KEPT ON FILE IN ST. JOHNS. THE GOVERNMENT PHYSICIAN'S REPORTS ARE RETURNED TO DR. BLACK, WHO IN TURN COMPLETES THE NECESSARY FORMS TO MAINTAIN THE MANDATORY MINERS' WORK CARDS. FROM TIME TO TIME DR. BLACK DOES TAKE ADDITONAL X-RAYS OF THE EMPLOYEES. USUALLY THESE EXTRA FILMS ARE PROMPTED BY AN

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EMPLOYEE COMPLAINT REGARDING HIS HEALTH. THESE ADDITIONAL FILMS ARE KEPT AT THE BAIE VERTE HOSPITAL BY DR. BLACK.

SUMMARY

WHILE THE INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE SURVEYS DONE BY OUR HYGIENIST, ED STEVENS, SHOW COUNTS EXCEEDING THE TLV FOR MINES OF 5 F/CC, THE HIGHEST LEVEL SHOWS 15 F/CC. AN EFFORT MUST BE MADE TO BRING THESE FEW STATIONS THAT REMAIN OVER TLV INTO CONTROL. THE HOUSEKEEPING THROUGHOUT THE MINE LEAVES MUCH TO BE DESIRED, AND I SUSPECT THAT THE FLUCTUATIONS IN COUNTS MAY WELL BE DUE TO THIS GENERALLY SUBSTANDARD HOUSEKEEPING. THE MILL AND SECONDARY CRUSHER CERTAINLY WOULD PROFIT BY INSTALLATION OF ADDITIONAL HOODING AND ENCLOSURES FOR THE CONVEYORS. PERHAPS SOME OF THIS COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED IN THE SECONDARY CRUSHER, WHILE THE PLANNED CHANGE-OVER IN THE IMPACTOR AREA IS BEING DONE.

WHILE AT PRESENT IT DOES NOT APPEAR THAT THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF NEWFOUNDLAND WILL MOVE TOO SPEEDILY IN THE AIR POLLUTION OR WATER POLLUTION AREAS, IT IS DIFFICULT TO PREDICT WHAT TIME AND A NEW GOVERNMENT MAY DEMAND. SINCE WE ARE AWARE OF THESE CRITICAL PROBLEMS AND THEY ARE EXTREMELY VISIBLE TO EVEN THE UNTRAINED EYE, I BELIEVE WE SHOULD MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO BRING THESE PROBLEMS UNDER CONTROL IN THE SHORTEST PERIOD OF TIME. I AM REFERRING SPECIFICALLY TO CONTROL OF THE TAILINGS DUMP, CONTROL OF EMISSIONS FROM THE DRYER STACKS, CONTROL OF THE ASBESTOS-CONTAINING WASTE WATER, AND LAST BUT CERTAINLY NOT LEAST, AN EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE TO REDUCE THE FIBER LEVELS THROUGHOUT THE ADVOCATE COMPLEX TO BELOW 5 F/CC AS MONITORED ON A REGULAR BASIS.

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