

Report No. 38-116
MN/I 12/16

DEPARTMENT OF MINES
SOUTH AUSTRALIA

STENHOUSE BAY - SALT.

by

L.L. Mansfield,
INSPECTOR OF MINES & QUARRIES.

Copy No. 3 of 7 Copies.

D.M.1497/54

Report No. 38-116

MN/I 12/16

DEPARTMENT OF MINES
SOUTH AUSTRALIA

STENHOUSE BAY - SALT

BY

L.L. MANSFIELD,
INSPECTOR OF MINES & QUARRIES.

Gypsum Belt from Washing Plant.

Regrading of Rail Track,

Housing.

Salt Production.

Crystallisers.

Salt Harvesting.

Capital.

Labour.

Summary.

D.M. 1497/54

DEPARTMENT OF MINES,
SOUTH AUSTRALIA

D.M. 1497/54

MN/I 12/16

STENHOUSE BAY - SALT.

Since the report of 22-9-54 on the above, the following work has been done -

GYPSUM BELT FROM WASHING PLANT.

The set-up of the scraper unit has been found to be unsuitable, the speed of the scraper being too fast, and a countershaft is to be installed at the winch house to reduce the speed. Work on the installation of the countershaft has not yet commenced and in the meantime bulldozers are being used to push the gypsum to the belt when a ship is to be loaded. Motor trucks are still being used with power shovels to transport gypsum to the bin, the aim of the management being to keep the bin full, and draw from the bin when a ship is being loaded, as well as from the conveyor belt. The belt cannot be used to fill the bin as it discharges at the lowest point of the bin. The foreman contends that the bulldozers could easily handle the transport of gypsum to ships and considers the continual use of motor transport unjustified. The writer expressed the same opinion on page four, lines six to ten of the last report.

REGRADING OF RAIL TRACK

About three-quarters of a mile of this three-mile track remains to be laid with rails, the formation having been completed.

HOUSING.

Five new houses are occupied, one is nearing completion, and the foundations of yet another have been laid.

SALT PRODUCTION.

Of the 1,215 tons of salt harvested last year, 1,000 tons have been shipped to Sydney.

CRYSTALLISERS.

No further work has been done on preparing any ground for the precipitation of salt.

SALT HARVESTING.

There appears to be a conflict of opinion as to the respective merits of a harvesting belt 100 feet or 200 feet in length, between the board and the management, the latter favouring a 200 foot span, but it is understood that nothing further has been done as far as drawings are concerned. The writer considers that a comparison of the economics of properly preparing the crystallisers by rolling, etc., so that Barber Green units can be used with mobile transport, as against the harvesting belt, should be thoroughly considered, particularly as Barber Green units could be utilised in some aspects of gypsum mining. It is of interest to note that B.H.P. at Whyalla consider the capital cost of harvesting belts spanning crystallisers, and only used for a relatively short time, unjustified. Hand methods of harvesting will be adopted this season if the level of Snow's Lake is low enough.

CAPITAL.

No information was available regarding the cost of preparing the small experimental 12 foot by 12 foot crystallisers, and no estimate has been made of the cost of preparing crystallisers or the cost of harvesting belts.

Indeed, until a programme has been decided on, no allocation or ear-marking of capital could be done. It is understood that the Company is strong enough financially to be able to finance any scheme eventually decided on.

LABOUR.

The writer has always felt that labour is badly organised on this job; a labour force of about 80 men appears high for a production of 12,000 tons per month. The continued use of six motor trucks, two shovel drivers, and one man at the tip, to keep the bin full, when two bulldozers could load a ship at the rate of approximately 240 tons an hour, is surely a waste of money and manpower which could be diverted to finishing the rail track and preparing crystallisers.

SUMMARY.

1. The erection of housing accommodation is proceeding steadily.
2. The set-up for the scraper loading at the stockpile has not been completed.
3. Nothing has been done in regard to the preparation of crystallisers.
4. There is no possibility of large scale salt production this season.
5. No capital has been allocated to salt production.
6. If the season permits, a limited amount of salt will be produced by hand methods from Snow's Lake.

7. There appears to be a sufficient labour force to do the preparatory work on salt production if properly organised.

L.L. Mansfield,

3.12.54

INSPECTOR OF MINES AND QUARRIES.