SEARCHLIGHT AREA

Searchlight Insulation Products, Inc.
Perlite Ridge mine and mill
B. L. Tanner in charge
Visited Sunday, March 8, 1953

This property and plant is a few miles northwest of Searchlight, west of the Railroad Pass—Searchlight road. At the mine they have a 10 x 20 crusher and 2 sets of rolls. Roughly the flow sheet is crusher to dryer to a double screen 3/16" on top and 10-12 mesh under. + 3/16 return to rolls minus 12 mesh waste are special product and the plus 10 mesh minus 3/16 is normal product. Perlite reserves have been estimated to be in excess of 100 million tons.

Plant Capacity

60 sacks of 4 cubic foot size per hour. Plan another furnace principally for coarser agate. The complete cost of each furnace installed is $1,000. The furnace is of the vertical type and Inconel is used for the wall material. The furnace operates at about 1900 degrees F. When making a harder and also more dense product, the furnace is run slightly colder. It is important that the diesel oil used is extremely low in sulphur, as the nickel alloy will not stand either sulphurous or hydrogenic atmosphere. They use a ps 200 domestic diesel fuel. They are very careful with their source of fuel and only buy that having guaranteed analysis. Their burners are of their own design. They did use compressed air burners for high heat but no longer use this type.

Tanner gives the impression of being a very capable man of inventive mind who has found it necessary to carefully design and make his changes in the plant for a proper product. He understands insulation well and showed several manufactured products such as various types of brick and roofing material made from his expanded perlite. He states that his overall cost for expanded perlite is 31 cents per bag at the plant. His operation is such that it appears that 3 men can handle all the work. The mine does not require a separate crew. They merely shut down the plant and mine enough
ore to hold them some time and then resume operation of the plant. He states his production is entirely adequate to supply all the demand that will be had in the Las Vegas area.

He will, however, have competition. O. J. Shearer who makes the combined metal furnaces is putting up a Panacalite plant at Henderson. My personal impression is that this new plant will make it difficult for Tanner. However, the chances are very good that Tanner will come out ahead and the combined metals plant will be a financial loss. It is absolutely impossible that the perlite market for the Las Vegas area will be large enough in the foreseeable future for the output of the larger plant. Slowing down of such a large installation will increase cost and probably make it easier for Tanner to compete.

Searchlite General

There is very little mining activity. The south Nevada mill (gold) north of Searchlight is being rehabilitated for ore from the Crescent mine. The Quartet mill was shut down recently.