

State Department of ~~Geology and~~ Mineral Industries

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STATE DEPT OF GEOLOGY
& MINERAL IND.

702 Woodlark Building
Portland, Oregon

Report by: N.S.W.
Date of Exam: July 12, 1945

TITLE ----- The proposed Rice-Bacon Building Stone Venture.

FOREWORD: The individuals named in this report contemplate operating a building stone quarry. They have already expended considerable time and money in the construction of a unique saw which they hope will enable them to cut sized blocks of natural stone at a cost which will enable them to compete with the cinder and cement block producers.

The particular stone they aspire to cut is a colorful red tuff, locally very popular, and occurring in great abundance along the Owyhee canal about seven miles from Adrian. Ownership of the land on which this tuff occurs is uncertain. Much of it is under control of the Bureau of Reclamation, Owyhee Irrigation Project, and some of it may be on State land. In general, it is located in Sec. 35, T. 21 S., R. 45 E. Negotiations for a lease are currently underway with the Bureau of Reclamation as the most favorable quarry sites are known to be on Bureau controlled land.

Since this entire venture is in the intangible stage, their being no property as yet, or no officially recognized company, or no operation, the following account necessarily deviates from the "Schedule for Field Mine Reports". It is submitted for the Department's information in the event that inquiries concerning these men's activities be made to the Department. A "Formal" handbook sort of a report will be submitted if, as, and when the proposed operation becomes a reality.

HISTORY In the construction of the canal many hundreds of tons of this rock was sliced from the nose of a point. Blocks of this rubble has been hauled

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away by natives and used for building purposes as far away as Harper and Nampa. Many large buildings have been constructed of it, notable amongst which is the Friends Church, Greenleaf, Idaho.

PROPOSED PLANT

Rice and Bacon feel that the buying public would prefer natural stone to aggregate blocks, were such available in standard uniform sized shapes. In support of this contention they claim several construction projects are being held in abeyance in anticipation of their contemplated production. Furthermore, they feel that they can produce cut tuff to sell at a price on par with aggregate blocks. Such cutting tests and costs computations as they have made to date are admittedly far too incomplete to be conclusive, but this machine does have some novel features. Briefly, a saw is mounted on the rear of a re-built automobile. One motor operates the whole unit and the design is such that the machine drives along slowly as the saw cuts. Machine speed is geared down to 9 inches a minute for extreme minimum. Tests indicate that a cutting speed of 2½ feet per minute can be expected with the present blade making a 10" deep cut.

In the field, they plan to level a quarry site (almost level now with the tuff massive and free of joints or weather cracks) and then make a series of parallel cuts down into the surface, both longitudinally and laterally. Blocks thus cut will then be cut to size and smooth on four sides, and they will be extracted by splitting them out in the conventional way. As a result, two opposite faces will show natural breaks.

ECONOMICS

The whole idea may well be economically unsound, but the rock is locally popular and the men are wide awake, enthusiastic mechanics with an idea.

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If they can obtain a lease on land it is certain they will try to make a go of it. Even if the construction block ^{angle} market should prove impractical, either because of excessive operating costs, or lack of a large enough of a market, the production of cut-to-size outdoor fireplace units and other garden sets may be possible. The stone is admirably suited for such purposes and the economics involved is conceivably more favorable.

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