

Dear Sir,

ASBESTOS - MACQUARIE HARBOUR

On the 1st. 2nd. and 5th. instant, I made an examination of an asbestos bearing area, known as Asbestos Point, on the western shore of Macquarie Harbour, approximately 18 miles from the town of Strahan and $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles in a northwesterly direction from Sarah (or Settlement) Island.

The coast line on this west shore of Macquarie Harbour, runs in a general north-west direction, and, from a point opposite to Sarah Island, for a distance of about seven miles to Double Cove Bay, consists of small open bays with rock adjustments, and affords little protection from the prevailing winds, for landing or anchorage. Reasonably safe anchorage is available at Sarah Island or at Double Cove Bay.

The country rises with a moderate grade from the shore line, to a height of about six or seven hundred feet in an average distance of one and a half miles which appears to be the division of the water shed of the range of hill country that makes the central feature of the strip of land between Macquarie Harbour and the main coast line. This area is densely covered with timber (mostly gum) and scrub and is cut by many gullies which drain towards the Harbour. Apart from prospecting, the only activity noted was a timber getters camp at Double Cove.

Asbestos Point consists of a low triangular shaped point, projecting in a northerly direction for a distance of about five chains into Macquarie Harbour, containing a dark coloured basic igneous rock which has been considerably altered to schist and serpentine and was traced inland for a distance of about 40 chains.

The serpentined zone outcrops at the apex of Asbestos Point and veins of chrysotile asbestos of varying thickness are irregularly spaced in the serpentine.

Two men have been engaged for a period of six weeks in prospecting this area and they have examined the country for a distance of 70 or 80 chains inland from Asbestos Point and have decided that the asbestos content for the serpentine does not warrant any prospecting further inland than about six chains from the Point.

This conclusion has been the result of their examination of a series of old trench prospects, presumed to have been put in by Bantick and party during 1929. The activities of this party are concentrated in developing a small quarry situated about 3 chains from the apex of the Point and this has been cut across the formation in an east west direction for a length of 30 feet with a depth of 9 feet and about 15 feet width. Some 50 tons of asbestos bearing rock has been mined and stacked for further treatment.

The quarry face gives the best present view of the formation and shows a serpentised rock of a greenish black colour mixed irregularly with portions of the original basic igneous rock in various stages of alteration to serpentine. The serpentine portion carries veins of asbestos traversing the serpentine in irregular directions and of a width from $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches to under one sixteenth of an inch in thickness. Veins of less than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch predominate and only one or two have width of over one inch and are very short in length of vein, they taper off to small size in a length of about one foot. The asbestos content of this face was estimated by measuring the widths of the exposed veins across the 30 foot face and was found to be about 18 inches of asbestos, which gives the proportion as 1 to 20 or 5%. However the values are more concentrated on the western side of the cut and further development may disclose a workable face of higher value.

The general strike of the serpentised zone is north and south and outcrops at the water line of the Harbour. A new trench 12 ft. long by three feet deep at about six chains inland, has been made by the party now prospecting here, and has disclosed a mass of yellow coloured serpentine carrying nice asbestos. On the west side of the serpentine formation there is a side area of schistose material which is very friable and carries an appreciable amount of magnetic iron particles. I was able to trace asbestos bearing rock inland for a distance of about 40 chains and examined six old prospect trenches that have been cut east and west across the strike of the formation. No very strong makes of asbestos were noted and the rock appears to be much harder as it proceeds inland and is generally of a darker colour. An outcrop in a creek bed was noted at the further end, containing very small veins of asbestos, in a fairly hard basic rock.

All samples of asbestos found appears to be of good quality and is readily teased into a soft silky white coloured wool, the fibres are not brittle.

The value of this asbestos deposit, as now developed, appears to be on the boarder line of profitable exploitation and requires prospecting at depth by shafting and driving.

It is reported that asbestos has been located at the Spero River, about two miles from the mouth, this is of interest in that it is in a direct north south line from Asbestos Point and thus coincides with the observed general strike of the serpentine.

Yours faithfully,

K. A. Rae,
INSPECTOR OF MINES.

15th March, 1941.