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GROWING INDUSTRY IN CASPER: Approximately half a million dollars was spent for erection of the new bentonite plant by Benton Clay Co. in Mountain View west of Casper. The new plant dries, crushes, grinds and sacks bentonite for shipment to oil drilling companies, foundries and chemical concerns, the chief users of bentonite.—(Tribune-Herald Photo).

Benton Clay Co. Erects Large New Milling Plant

Want to play a trick on a chum, or paint a pair of stockings on your legs? You can do both with bentonite. It will also make a good face cream, tooth paste, shoe polish and relieve soreness of horses' heels.

As a matter of fact, you can do those; anything with bentonite except eat it, and that's only because it is a mineral and indigestible. It will make brass stay fresh for days.

Since, bentonite now constitutes one of the largest industries in Casper. A new half million dollar bentonite plant is in the process of being completed in Mountain View west of Casper.

E. A. Kreiner, vice-president and general manager of Benton Clay Co., has been in the bentonite business in Casper since 1945. He came here from Minneapolis, Minn., and is the chief owner the new plant in Mountain View is in operation.

The new processing plant is located just north of the old one and contains the company offices of course. The corrugated all-steel building contains approximately 12,000 sq. ft., which is about double the area of the old plant.

The enlarged plant can process about three or four times more bentonite than the old plant. Its dimensions are 80 ft. by 120 ft. and it is about 32 ft. high in the center. The machinery is all electrically driven, and the dryer is heated by natural gas.

Some work still has to be completed at the plant site, Kreiner said. The area behind the new building is to be covered with gravel, and roads into the location have to be graded and made more passable to traffic.

The clay is stockpiled behind the plant for loading onto conveyor belts which dump the material to be the largest dryer in Wyoming. The dryer is about 165 feet long.

From the dryer, the clay is dumped into a rotating machine which smashes the clay into tiny particles, sifting it the next step in the process. Here the clay is called crushed to flour and is dumped into two 200-ton capacity storage tanks at a fine, powdery form.

The product is then taken from the tanks as it is needed to be packed and loaded onto freight cars for delivery to various destinations.

From the time a given amount of raw clay enters the plant until it is packed and loaded into a car it or it minutes, Kreiner said.

Kreiner said that Wyoming bentonite is supposed to be the best in the world and, therefore, is shipped all over the world. Benton Clay Co. has seven deposits of bentonite within a 75-mile radius of Casper from which the company obtains its material for the plant.

Chief users of bentonite are drilling companies, foundries and chemical companies. The Casper plant will export about 10 railroad cars when it is in full operation, Kreiner added.

Bentonite is used in asphalt roads, beauty clays, cardboard, dry cells, fruit juices, germicides, insecticides, laxatives, metal polish, mimeograph records, textile printing and hundreds of thousands of other products.

Kreiner said the plan is perfect for making blades and chalk tanks. About 30 men of 8 were used to haul the ground around Morgan Junior High School to help widen out of the transition.

In the next few days pick up your favorite memento of this time, meantime, it probably contains bentonite" clay mined and processed right here in Wyoming.

Increased Radioactivity Reported in 13 States

WASHINGTON (AP) — Radioactivity attributed to Russia's nuclear testing in the atmosphere has reached levels in 13 states which would constitute a health hazard if counted over a long period of time, Secretary of Welfare Abraham Ribicoff said today.

The secretary's actual phrasing was a negative statement—that the hazard would not exist unless the level were long maintained—but a spokesman for his office said that language also covered the positive statement.

Ribicoff said that reports showed sharp increases in ground level atmospheric radioactivity over the weekend in 13 eastern and northern states.

"Although subject to laboratory confirmation, the size and pattern of these fatal increases suggests unusually increased fallout from the current series of Russian atmospheric nuclear tests, presumably the multi - megaton bursts that have been reported," he said.

"Careful laboratory and field analyses of the nature and composition of the radioactive fallout will be necessary.

"However, I am assured by the Public Health Service that some radiation levels of the range now mentioned were a long period of time, they do not pose a public health hazard."

Rebels Burn Provincial Viet Capital

SAIGON, South Viet Nam, (AP) — In their boldest stroke of South Viet Nam's civil war, Communist rebels attacked and burned the capital of Phuoc Thanh Province, the government said today.

The daring raid, the first on any provincial capital, was staged early Monday on the capital, Phuoc Vinh, the government said. The city is only 80 miles north of this capital.

The Communist Viet Cong rebels held the town for several hours in predawn darkness, burning and wounding several provincial buildings. One source estimated 1,000 guerrilla took part in the attack. The government said the rebels attacked to liberate rebel prisoners.

It marked a new height in violence in the areas north of Saigon where the rebels are believed to

More On Bentonite Refining

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