

SINTER PLANT INTERESTING TO VISIT

By D. E. Pugh

Under the expert guidance of Dave Corkill and Guy Ballon, a number of fascinated M.H.S. students were shown through the Wawa sinter plant this week, courtesy of A.O.D. Watching heavy iron buckets tilt and drop their 3 tons of greyish brown ore with resounding thuds at the ore preparation dump, the students learned that siderite had originally been discovered during hematite mining at the Helen in 1911. However mining this low grade 33 percent iron ore had only become profitable with a government bounty and development of a new sophisticated sinter beneficiating process in 1937.

The students cautiously peered into a door where an ear ringing Symons cone crusher effectively reduced ton after ton of hard six inch ore to pebbles 1½ inch in size. Unfortunately the sink float process could not be viewed. Here lighter waste rock is separated in a liquid medium from the heavier specific gravity of siderite ore. After a third ore crushing to ¼ inch, the students watched in some trepidation as a gigantic, steel wheeled, and spiked monster powerfully waded through 7,200 tons of crushed ore. Blended with coke, limestone, and some reddish hematite, the product was delivered by a continuous noisy conveyor to the large sinter machine hoppers.

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Climbing steep winding steel stairs, gingerly dodging sooty walls and railings, and peering through the gathering cloud of dust, the students coughed, and shouted in amazement. Here the ore slowly advanced on a massive iron grate beneath a roaring Dante's inferno of burning pressurized bunker oil, sucked downward through the rock by great bel- lowing fans. As the sinter cooked during the next 20 minutes, moving slowly down the conveyor the students waited at the end to watch with amazement as red hot chunks unloaded in a cloud of flames and sparks. "I can't stand it", said one girl. "Let's get out." "It's so dirty and dusty." Said another, "It's great to visit, but I wouldn't want to work here", while his friend retorted, "For \$4.01 an hour, I'd start tomorrow. It's not bad. You don't do anything. You just sit and keep warm." A soot and oil caked worker disagreed, then adjusted the fuel valves, while the girls gazed with great curiosity, having never seen anyone so dirty. At the conclusion of the tour the students saw the screened and cooled sinter loaded on Algoma Central Railway ore cars for the daily freight to Algoma Steel.

By such tours, social studies students become familiar with the economy of the local area. For it is this economy which many will join in the near future.

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