

Mr. James R. Barber

1225 Indian Hill Boulevard, Claremont, California 91711

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Mr. Charles Ammon  
27 Athlone Road  
Floreat Park  
Perth, Western Australia

Dear Mr. Ammon:

I was very pleased to receive your invitation to comment on Lang Hancock and his contribution to the iron ore developments of Western Australia. My acquaintance with him began in 1962, and knowing him has been a liberal education. I hope the following will be helpful.

Lang Hancock is a most unusual and forceful man with tremendous driving power. It is only by close association that you become aware of his warmth and generosity, his humor and his sense of fundamental values. The fact that his family for three generations has been so closely associated with Australian history has given him a rare understanding of its people, great pride in his country and an instinctive grasp of Australian affairs. He is a man of great vision and feels that industrially the surface of Australia has barely been scratched. He "believes" in things and arrives at his own conclusions, which may or may not be popular at the moment. He has an innate sense of "right" and "wrong" and always gives credit where credit is due. He is what is known as a "fighter".

More than any one man, Lang Hancock is responsible for the Hamersley Iron development. Australia is fortunate to have such a man able to contribute to the development of its natural resources. Much has been said and written of Hamersley already, but the following may help round out the picture.

Lang Hancock personally discovered large quantities of iron ore in the Hamersleys as early as 1952, prior to the lifting of the embargo. He collected samples and had them analyzed. He knew he had made major finds which could well alter the world pattern of iron ore supply. From the start he had the vision, the comprehension and the faith that was required to set the stage for the development of these resources on a scale commensurate with their value. He thought in world terms, rather than in just national. It is this early comprehension of the order of magnitude of the scene yet to unfold that set him apart.

He studied the world ore picture. He mastered the basic statistics. He noted the methods used. He was shrewd enough to realize that he needed help in bringing his dream to fruition. Also to realize that premature disclosure too far in advance of political and economic events in Australia and Japan could harm the orderly development that was in the nation's interest. He had to wait the turn of the wheel. In the meantime, being a man of action as well, he set about doing something about moving the wheel along a little faster.

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A great believer in the individual and what he can accomplish on his own, Lang exerted his considerable influence and strong sense of direction toward lifting the embargo and encouraging iron ore development by private enterprise. He did much to ensure that an economic climate in Western Australia, conducive to the large inflow of capital which he knew would be required, was established. At times his efforts on behalf of his state and country cost him personal popularity.

He and his energetic partner, Peter Wright, encouraged participation of Australian mining companies in these Australian ore developments. They took their message and potential to Rio Tinto, in Melbourne. An agreement aimed at developing these mineral resources brought to light by Hancock and Wright was signed. This agreement is the foundation of what is now Hamersley Iron and had much to do with the subsequent merger of Rio Tinto and Consolidated Zinc into what is now CRA of Australia, a far stronger company than either of the two individually. This alone was a tremendous contribution to Australia.

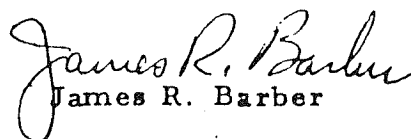
Hancock and Wright also encouraged participation by overseas firms such as our own. Kaiser Steel has never had stronger or more steadfast friends. Lang took Tom Price in hand when he went over to examine the ore deposits. He flew him about showing him the ore and talked to him. A great deal of Lang's contagious enthusiasm and appreciation of the potentials involved rubbed off on Tom. Lang exerted himself in every way to help Kaiser fit into the picture. Our company owes him a deep debt of gratitude. Our participation in Hamersley Iron has made Kaiser Steel a larger and far stronger company.

The personal relationship established by Lang Hancock and Peter Wright with Val Duncan, CRA's Chairman in the United Kingdom, was invaluable inasmuch as it kept alive Mr. Duncan's very active interest and gave him a better understanding of what was needed.

I have enumerated a few things of which I have personal knowledge, and I am sure you will realize that without Lang Hancock there would be no Hamersley Iron.

There are many details which I assume you have from other sources. However, if there is any special information that you feel I could furnish, I would be happy to do so.

Very truly yours,

  
James R. Barber