

caviare and smoked sturgeon industry; but so far back as 1880 United States buyers began to urge the St. John river (N.B.) fishermen to obtain all the sturgeon they could. These New York buyers, it is said, had encouraged in the rivers of Florida the pursuit of the sturgeon fishery to such an extent that they were rapidly cleaned out. The St. John river sturgeon fishery did not last more than six years. At its height as many as 200 sturgeon were often taken in a single haul, and the leaping of large fish was a common sight as far up the river as Fredericton. Then for a period of eight or ten years the total prohibition of the fishery was carried out. The demand for sturgeon has continued to increase, and with the decay of great fisheries like the sturgeon fisheries of the Delaware river and bay, and the smaller fisheries on the Potomac, Hudson, Kennebec, etc., United States merchants have had to rely on supplies from Canada. Canadian fishermen rapidly learned the high value of a fish which hitherto they had treated with contempt. On all the great lakes, but especially in Lake Huron and the St. Clair waters, sturgeon fishing has been actively pursued; but the best caviare, and in some respects, the best sturgeon, have been shipped for many years from the waters of Manitoba and from the Lake of the Woods. On Lake of the Woods alone there were last year between 200 and 300 large pound nets set in the limited area which lies within United States territory. In the Canadian part the number ran from 30 to 60. Nearly 1,000,000 pounds weight of sturgeon was shipped from these nets in 1895, all of which passed through Rat Portage en route to the United States. Several firms at Rat Portage have employed experts to manufacture caviare, and this has for some years been done at Selkirk, Manitoba, the flesh of the sturgeon being frozen, pickled, smoked, and in some instances canned like salmon. Canned smoked sturgeon is superior to salmon. In one-pound cans it sells wholesale for \$2.50 per dozen, whereas Pacific salmon realize only \$1.25 to \$1.50 per dozen.

It is on the Pacific coast that the sturgeon exceed all others for size and number. Whereas sturgeon 40, 50, up to 100 pounds are considered large in inland and Atlantic waters, there are specimens taken in the

Fraser river at times weighing from 800 to 1,000 pounds. In the British Columbia Board of Trade report, 1896, the opinion of the Dominion Commissioner of Fisheries is recorded as follows:—"The sturgeon which is so plentiful in British Columbia affords a fishery which is capable of development on a large scale. Professor Prince stated that the sturgeon found here are finer than those in Russian waters, and he saw no reason why this province should not compete with Russia in the several products of such an industry."

ASBESTOS.

Asbestos is a physical paradox, yet one of nature's most marvelous productions. It has been called a mineralogical vegetable; it is both fibrous and crystalline; elastic, yet brittle; a floating stone, which can be readily carded, spun and woven into tissue. In Germany it is known as steinblachs (stone flax), and the miners of Quebec give it quite as expressive a name—pierre coton (cotton stone). The asbestos mines of Quebec are the most famous in the world, yielding 85 per cent. of the entire output, Italy being the only competing country, and there the industry is declining. Although Charlemagne is said to have had a tablecloth of asbestos, which he cleansed by throwing into the fire, it was practically unknown until 1850.

The Italian mineral was then experimented with, and some years later put on the market. In 1878 the first Canadian mine was opened, and the product steadily increased until 1890, when 9,860 tons, worth \$1,260,000, were mined. There has since been a decline in value, the amount for 1896 being 12,200 worth only \$439,000. Asbestos is flexible, non-combustible and a non-conductor of heat and electricity, and on these properties its increasing use depends. It is spun into yarn, from which cloth is woven for drop curtains in theaters, clothing for firemen, acid workers, etc. It is made into lamp wicks and gloves for stokers and ropes for fire escapes. It is felted into millboard, to be used as an insulator in dynamos and as a fire-proof lining for floors. It is used to insulate electric wires.

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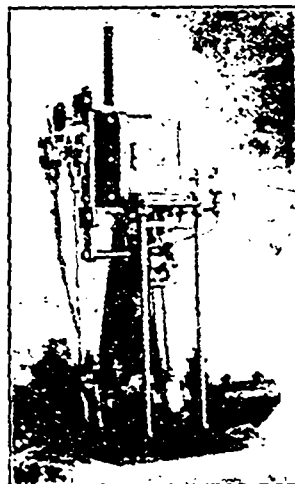
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