

to 60 per cent, depending on the ore. Canadian zinc is obtained by the use of electrolysis, which refines the product to more than 99 per cent pure.

Canada exports over 90 per cent of its zinc. The United States consumes more than 70 per cent of the refined zinc exports. Britain, Pakistan and Venezuela are also important customers. Belgium purchases more than 45 per cent of the zinc concentrate and Japan 20 per cent. The United States and West Germany are also important purchasers of Canadian zinc concentrates.

Canada welcomes the prospect of a 3 per cent annual increase in the world demand for zinc during the Eighties. Not only does it have the resources required to maintain its traditional share of this growing market it is even hoping to expand it.

Asbestos

The fibrous mineral, asbestos, is known mainly for its resistance to fire. It has over 3 000 industrial uses, such as the manufacture of automobile and aircraft brake linings. About half the world production of asbestos is used in the manufacture of fibro-cement products for the construction industry.

Canadian exports of asbestos fibre represent about half the total world exports. Canada provides 24 per cent of the world's supply of this mineral and ranks second, behind the Soviet Union, in extraction and processing.

The West's largest deposit is found in Asbestos, Quebec, where the formation of this mineral dates back over 400 million years. Quebec continued to produce 85 to 90 per cent of the Canadian total each year.

Over 95 per cent of the annual asbestos production is exported to 70 countries. The United States is the main importer of Canadian asbestos, and other customers include the Federal Republic of Germany, Japan, Britain, France, Australia and Spain.

Asbestos will undoubtedly continue to be important economically since a substitute is unlikely to be found in the near future. Moreover, industry considers the supervision of its use to be pragmatic and generally acceptable.

Potash

The world fertilizer industry consumes some 26 million tonnes of potash a year. A certain amount is also used in the manufacture of soap, detergents, glass, ceramic products, dyes, explosives and medicines.