

Although of such recent date, the Eastern Townships asbestos, for the name may as well be retained, has now a world-wide reputation, and is shipped in large quantities to the various countries in Europe, England, Italy, Germany and Belgium, and to the United States also, and of the many firms now engaged in its manufacture, the greater portion draw the bulk of their raw material from a small area in Eastern Quebec; the Italian mines, from which the asbestos was formerly obtained, being worked with far greater difficulty than those in Canada, while the supply of the mineral is much more uncertain, and although for certain special lines the Italian may be more valuable than the Canadian, the latter has been found of sufficient value for most purposes so as to almost entirely supplant the former, even with those firms who control the output of the Italian mineral, a fact evidenced by the recent purchase of a Canadian property by the United Asbestos Co. of London, England.

Although asbestos was known at many points in Eastern Quebec more than thirty years ago, and was exhibited at the International Exhibition in London in 1862, no attempt was made to work the mineral for some years. The credit of the discovery of the Thetford area is probably due to a French-Canadian named Fecteau, and following up his discovery certain areas were secured from the Government by private parties. The true value of the mineral was not at first recognized, and in the first year of mining operations, (1878) only 50 tons were taken out, for which a ready sale was not at first obtained. The importance of the discovery was however speedily ascertained, and new companies obtained tracts of rocky land in the townships of Thetford and Coleraine, and began the work of exploration and mining. Had the Government of Quebec at that day been in possession of the requisite information regarding its mineral lands, it is very probable that the thousands of acres which rapidly changed hands in that section of the province, would have brought in much greater returns than the usual Government