

### THE NEW ASBESTOS MILLS OF BLACK LAKE, P. Q.

Commercial asbestos is a fire-resisting substance composed of silky fibers up to 6 in. in length, which can be used for packing or woven into fabrics. Its value corresponds approximately with the length of the fiber. It is prepared from a mineral of variable color, which is usually found deposited in thin sheets in the seams of granite rock. The fiber is normal to the sheets and its length is thus limited by the thickness of the seam. The most important deposits so far discovered in America are one of flesh-colored mineral in Arizona and a green deposit at Black Lake, in the Province of Quebec, Canada. In order to secure the asbestos mineral it is necessary to quarry the granite in which it occurs and afterward separate the materials by crushing. Formerly the asbestos mineral was hammered by hand until the fiber was separated and brought to a merchantable condition. This method was slow and expensive, and was improved some years ago by Messrs. King Bros., who devised machinery to work the mineral without breaking the fiber, although some hand work was still required for the long fibers which were most easily broken in the machines.

The Black Lake asbestos mines are about 50 miles from Sherbrooke, on the line to Quebec, and are the richest deposits known in Canada. They were discovered and opened by Mr. Walter Kerr, who operated them for several years by the old hand methods. Recently a company has been organized and special machinery installed, which greatly increases the capacity and provides a superior quality of finished product.

The mines, of which there are several, are located within a radius of one mile from the mills, with which they are connected by a wagon road and narrow gauge railroad. The mineral now is quarried in open pits to a maximum depth of about 50 ft., the granite being drilled by steam and blasted with dynamite. The granite is rejected and the asbestos mineral loaded on dump cars and delivered to the mills over a high wooden trestle, from which it is discharged to the bins and supplied to jaw crushers, which break it into 2-in. pieces. From the crushers it is delivered by bucket elevators to cylindrical screens in the top of a two-story mill. The large pieces are returned to the crusher, and that which passes through the screens is discharged into long cylindrical dryers, in which it is heated until all dampness is removed.

After being dried, the mineral is taken up by a rock hopper and served to several rows of crushers, thus being reduced little by little, till it reaches the emery grinders from which the poorest grade of asbestos is derived. These rows of crushers placed on the second story of the mill reduce the mineral to small pieces several inches in length, and pulverize the particles of rock which still adhere to it. The

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