

THE CANADIAN ASBESTOS INDUSTRY.

THERE is probably no mining interest in Canada that has shown such marked progress, or that gives such promise of profitable and constant returns as that of the peculiar mineral asbestos. Although of comparatively recent date the many uses to which its manufacture has been applied, have increased so rapidly that it is with difficulty that the production can keep pace with the present demand, although the output from the Canadian mines has increased one hundredfold in the last ten years. The word is derived from the Greek, *Asbestos*, signifying inconsumable or unquenchable, and this property was known to the Ancients many hundred years ago. The term asbestos, is at the present day applied to minerals which differ very considerably in their mode of occurrence and composition. That which was first known as the asbestos of the Ancients is a variety of the hornblende family, and allied to tremolite, actinolite, etc. It consists of fine, somewhat elastic fibres, varying in color from almost pure white to greyish and greenish tints, and in length at times nearly or quite two feet, with a soft silky aspect, looking very much, in fine specimens, like floss silk itself. In the flame of the blow-pipe, the mineral is but little acted upon, although after being exposed for some time to long continued heat the fibre loses tenacity, and becomes brittle or even sandy to the touch. It can be spun like cotton and woven into cloth, and can be manufactured into a great variety of substances such as fire proof curtains, wallpaper, suits of clothing, millboard, rope and steam packing of various kinds. It is of special value for the last purpose, owing to its entire non-conductivity of heat and indestructibility when in the case of the severe work it has to stand in connection with marine and other engines it is exposed to long and constant wear; in