

Island. Some of these specimens belong to the group of actinolitic minerals like the deposits found in Potton and Bolton, but among others observed from that country, were samples of vein asbestos, equalling in quality any obtained at Thetford, and having a fibre from two to three inches in length. Little attention has, however, been paid to these deposits by the people of the island, and their extent is entirely as yet, unknown. It cannot, however, be expected that this seeming indifference will long continue, in view of the rapidly increasing demand and consequent advance in prices. And it is probable that the time is not far distant when Quebec's greatest rival as a source of supply for asbestos will here be found.

While the mode of occurrence of asbestos, and, to a limited extent, its uses as well, have been known to a few, probably for the past twenty centuries, the discovery of its true economic value and of its great commercial importance are matters of quite recent date. Under the general term "asbestos," we find included several varieties of minerals, or of rock matter, some of which present startling and somewhat anomalous features. For instance, rocks as a rule, or the ingredients of mineral veins are generally regarded as possessing a weight or density several times greater than water, yet in one form, at least, of this mineral, we have a substance so light that it will float readily upon water, and has in consequence received the name of *mountain cork*. To most people, also, in speaking of rocks, minerals, or ores generally, the impression is conveyed that these are dense, heavy bodies, which can be crushed to powder with the proper application of sufficient force, yet here we have a mineral which can be pulled apart with comparative ease, teased out into fibre, and which thereupon presents the characteristic appearance of fine floss silk or cotton, so much so that in certain places this material is familiarly known by the name of cotton rock—or as the French call it, *pierre du coton*.

We have therefore here a substance which in some respects presents features belonging to both the mineral and vegetable kingdoms.

While, however, asbestos in all its forms must be styled a true mineral it possesses certain properties which distinguish it very clearly from many others. Among these presumably the most important is that of non-conductivity or its power of resisting the action of heat,