

the output, that the present conditions of mining as contrasted with those of even five years ago are completely changed, and in no case have the necessary provisions been made for a future regular supply. Owing to the fact, at Thetford more particularly, that the principal workings are located in a small knoll of serpentine surrounded largely by drift-covered rock of uncertain value, when first worked the large amount of waste rock which goes to the dump has been left in too close proximity to the pits. This, so long as the pits were not of too great depth to be easily worked and drained, or the demand was not too great to be easily supplied, did not so much matter, but the demand has increased so rapidly, that it is with difficulty met with the present appliances, and the inconvenience experienced from the inauguration of such a system of mining and disposition of waste rock is becoming so great as to necessitate a radical change in this respect, and that very speedily. It will soon be found impossible to carry the system of quarry working to a much greater depth, owing to the danger arising from slides, and from the cramped character of the openings. The plan, which should have been adopted at first, of removing the waste material to some portion of the area of no economic value will, therefore, have to be adopted, and the sooner the better, since, at the present rate of output, each additional year but adds to the trouble by increasing the amount of rock which must at last require to be removed.

Character of the workings at Thetford.

The Black Lake areas are in this respect rather more fortunately situated, since the principal mines are on the face of a bold ridge, and there are areas of barren rock or granitic masses at a convenient distance on which the refuse can be dumped; although here, at several of the mines, the same difficulty is experienced as at Thetford.

The Black Lake mines.

The output of Canadian asbestos when graded is divisible into four portions, numbers one, two and three and waste. The first includes the long fine silky fibre, over one inch or thereabouts in length or a little less, well adapted for spinning and manufacture into yarn, rope and similar products. The price of this fibre has rapidly advanced from eighty dollars, at which it was quoted three years ago, to one hundred and seventy or more, with an upward tendency. For many purposes it is found to be quite equal to the Italian product, while for others it is even regarded as superior. The second grade includes much good fibre, but shorter and from smaller veins; the third kind includes material very often with but little continuous fibre, or discolored and with the vein matter broken by bits of rock or grains of iron ore, while the waste includes a considerable quantity of fibre and other asbestos-like material that accumulates about the pits and sheds.

Four qualities of asbestos.

Price.

Grading of output.