

# Canada Weekly

Ottawa  
Canada

Volume 12 No. 15  
April 11, 1984

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## Aluminum — from pots and pans to space shuttles

From its earliest application in pots and pans, the use of aluminum spread rapidly through the electrical, building, transportation and packaging markets. Siding for houses and curtainwall for office buildings rivalled use in aircraft, cars, trucks, buses and railway rolling stock for the most rapid growth. Aluminum bottle caps, foil packaging and later beverage cans appeared in more and more shopping carts.

Today, nearly 100 years after its commercial debut, aluminum continues to outperform other metals, owing in part to its inherent advantages, but due also to major development efforts by Alcan (Aluminum Company of Canada) and others in the industry.

A quick look at some new developments reveals part of what is in store. Although some current products are maturing, new ones are emerging and it may be some decades before aluminum realizes its full potential.

A new market for aluminum emerged when special forming and bonding tech-

niques, such as NOKOLOK developed by Alcan, allowed fabrication of aluminum radiators for automobiles. Aluminum's lightness, and high heat conductivity make it an ideal material for this purpose. Today, Alcan aluminum is found in these and other heat exchangers across the world.

Alcan remains a broadly based supplier to the automotive industry, producing material for products, such as bumpers, in Canada; radiators, body panels and trim in the United States; pistons and castings in Germany; and wheels in Japan.

Today's jumbo jetliners are the product of a generation of refinement in the design of aluminum airframes and the quality of the aluminum that goes into them. Tomorrow's airliners will require even more sophisticated materials, and Alcan is working to provide them.

After years of research into alloying aluminum with lithium, two types of Alcan aluminum-lithium material have reached the development stage. They are 10 per cent lighter and 10 per cent stiff-



*Maison Alcan, international headquarters of Aluminum Company of Canada.*



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