

ASBESTUS ; ITS HISTORY, MODE OF OCCURRENCE AND USES.

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The asbestos mines of the province of Quebec are, at the present day, of special interest to the mining and industrial world, from the fact that in so far as now known they practically represent the only deposits where this mineral, of a quality adapted for spinning and for the finer purposes of manufacture, can be profitably obtained. So great are the advantages which these mines possess, particularly as regards their accessibility and the ease with which the asbestos is extracted, that unless fields as yet unknown and as easy of access can be discovered, this province will doubtless long enjoy the position of being the principal source of supply for this peculiar and important substance.

The rocks with which the asbestos veins are associated in Quebec constitute a somewhat distinct series, which have, for the last thirty years, been known under the name of the "Quebec group." They comprise an extensive and important development of both sedimentary and eruptive rocks, which extend through out the eastern part of the province, from the Vermont boundary to the extremity of the Gaspé peninsula. They are not recognized in their entirety in any other part of Canada, though certain portions of the group are found in their extension southward into the United States. Crossing the Gulf of St. Lawrence they, however, form a very extensive belt in the island of Newfoundland, where, more particularly at certain points on the west coast, the same series of slates, sandstones, diorites and serpentines occur, the whole presenting features both from geological and mineralogical standpoints, very similar to what are seen in this portion of Canada. While these rocks in Newfoundland have, to a certain extent, been traced out, in so far at least as the entirely unsettled and unopened character of that section of the country permitted, no systematic search for asbestos has as yet been made, though, that the mineral occurs there at a number of points and in a variety of forms is clearly indicated by the specimens which have from time to time been obtained in the course of the general geological exploration of the