

Mixte de Coopération établi par l'Accord cadre de coopération économique et commercial conclu entre le Canada et la Communauté en 1976. Cette réunion servira à passer en revue les résultats des nombreuses activités de coopération industrielle, scientifique et technologique qui ont eu lieu depuis la dernière réunion et à adopter un nouveau programme de travail. Après son séjour à Ottawa, M. Haferkamp voyagera à travers le pays pour rencontrer des membres de plusieurs gouvernements provinciaux.

#### WORLD SYMPOSIUM ON ASBESTOS

As one of the current activities under the 1976 Canada-EC Framework Agreement, the Government of Canada, the Province of Quebec and the Commission of the European Communities are sponsoring a "World Symposium on Asbestos" to be held in Montreal, May 25-27, 1982. The theme will be "Asbestos, Health and Society". The Symposium will bring together representatives from government, labour, industry and the scientific communities of Canada and the European Community.

Asbestos is a generic term for naturally occurring minerals having silky fibrous characteristics. Asbestos is valued for these fibrous characteristics and high tensile strength that impart reinforcing properties to numerous products (eg. cement pipes) and its resistance to high temperatures and abrasion (eg. insulation and friction products). Although there are well over a 1,000 uses of asbestos, by far the largest proportion is used as asbestos cement products. In recent years there has been a great deal of research towards finding substitutes for asbestos; for some applications, suitable substitutes have been found but not for others.

Asbestos is not only a strategic industrial material, but its production and processing is important for the livelihood of several mining communities in Canada and the European Communities. In Canada, most of the mines are located in the lower St. Lawrence River area of Quebec. In the EC, indigenous output currently comes from mines in Italy but a new mine in the shadows of Greece's Mount Olympus is almost ready to come on stream. The new mine/mill will contain the most modern and indeed stringent fibre emission control system. When fully operational the mines in Italy and Greece will furnish almost one-half of the Community's asbestos requirements.

For several decades it has been recognized that exposure to airborne asbestos dust is hazardous to health. The degree of risk is dependent upon the concentration of the fibre in the inhaled air, the duration of exposure, and the type of fibre.

As knowledge about the health hazard posed by asbestos dust has increased, concern has risen in business and government to protect workers and the public. Manufacturing equipment and techniques have been developed that can radically decrease the degree of contamination of the atmosphere in mine, mill and factory. Some existing mines and manufacturing plants make full use of these advances in knowledge, equipment and technique; others do not. More precise sampling and measuring procedures are being developed for routinely monitoring the concentration of asbestos fibres in the atmosphere and in the occupational workplace.