

Lying on the asbestos bearing rock there is a deposit of soil varying in thickness. At Thetford it is about 15 ft. thick. It is removed either by steam shovels or by hand shovels, loaded into cars and drawn away.

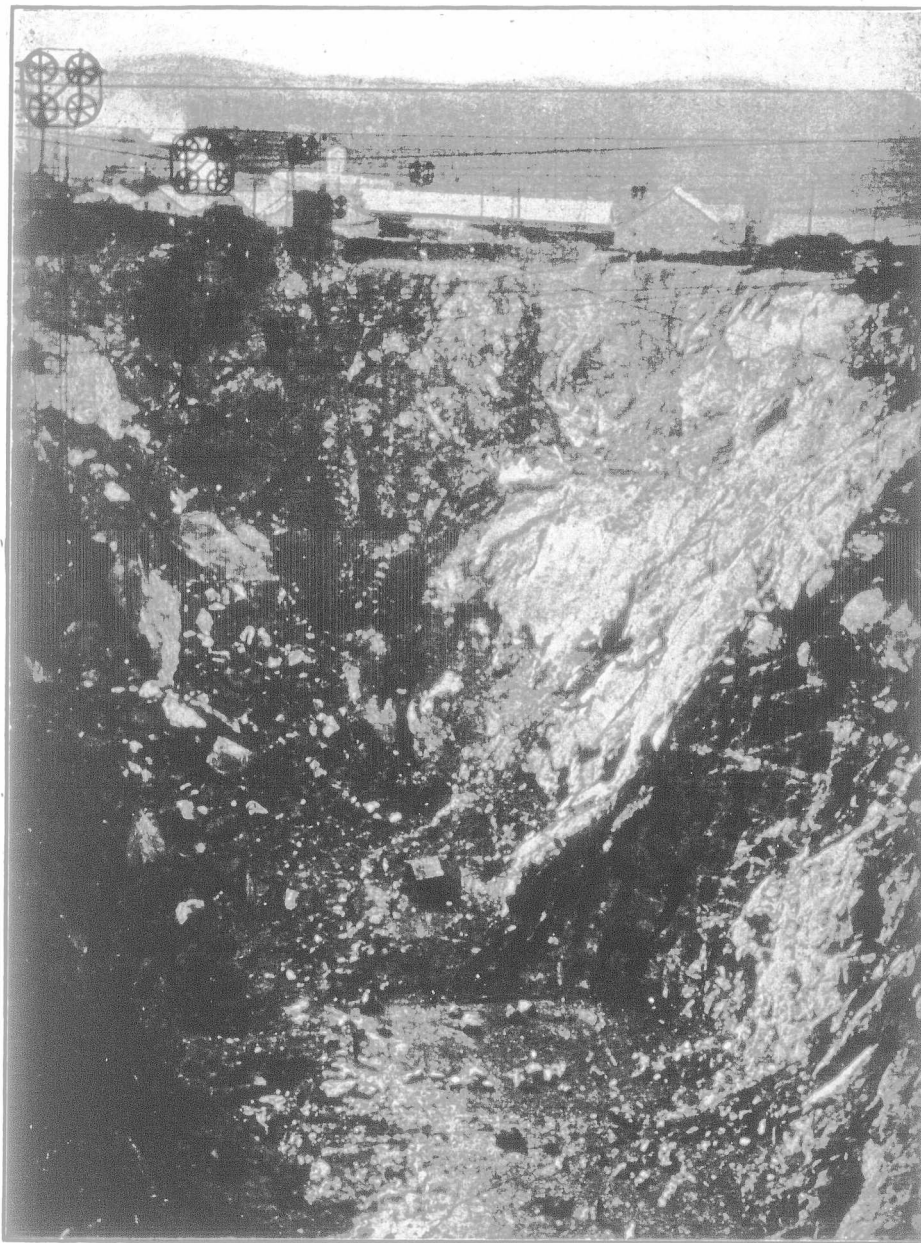
When the overburden has been removed the rock is broken down in a series of benches by the use of dynamite. Machine drills are used in most of the mines, but hand drilling is the practice at some of the smaller properties.

The broken rock is sorted and the best quality of asbestos, known as long fibre, is picked out

to break the rock. The fibre thus separated from the rock is cleaned by girls using smaller hammers. The product from hand-cobbing is the asbestos known as 'crude' and is ready for the market.

Mill Treatment.

The discards from the cobbing sheds and the rock sent directly from the mine to the mill are treated mechanically. The material is first dried by exposure to the air, by steam pipes or



Asbestos Mining at Thetford, P.Q.

by hand. Rock containing short fibre and all the fine material is sent to the mill. The remaining rock is piled on the waste dumps.

To hoist the ore from the pits cable derricks are used. A wire rope is stretched across the pit and a carrier is suspended from the rope along which it travels by a system of pulleys as may be seen in the accompanying photograph.

Hand-Cobbing.

At the mills the higher grade mine product is broken up by hand. Heavy hammers are used

in rotary dryers. The rock is then first crushed in jaw or gyratory rock-breakers, and then by rolls or in machines known as fibreizers and cyclones.

The material from these machines falls on a screen. It travels along on the screen, passing under an opening up which a strong current of air is drawn by a fan. The fibre is sucked up while the waste rock passes on. The fibre drawn up by the fan is then classified by treatment on grading screens into long and short fibre.