

ASBESTUS.

755. There is probably no mining industry in Canada that has shown such marked progress as that of the peculiar material called asbestus. The mineral which is produced in Canada under this head is in reality not asbestus proper, but a form of serpentine called chrysotile. It occurs in veins in certain portions of the great belt of serpentine rocks of the Eastern Townships of Quebec. In the Laurentian rocks of certain areas the variety actinolite sometimes forms hilly masses of considerable size, which answers well for cements, paints, &c., though not found to answer for the manufacture of millboards and the finer qualities of steam packing.

The Eastern Townships' asbestus is shipped in large quantities to England, Germany, Belgium, Holland and the United States.

756. The true value of the mineral was not at first recognized, and in the first year of mining operations (1878) only 50 tons were disposed of. The mining, though prosecuted now for a dozen years, is practically confined to two small areas about four miles apart. The first, and as yet the most important of these, is a small mound near Thetford Station, which rises about 80 or 90 feet. Employed in this industry are 40 boilers, with a capacity of 1,825 horse-power, and about 2,000 men. The value of the plant is estimated at \$335,000.

757. The following table, made up from returns furnished by the producers, gives the quantity and value of shipments from 1879 to 1887, after which the amount of production is given. It is believed, however, that, in some of the earlier years, the output was sometimes given instead of the quantity shipped, and, according to returns of shipments made by the Quebec Central Railway, the aggregate quantity is too high.

SHIPMENT AND PRODUCTION OF ASBESTUS IN CANADA, 1879 TO 1895.

YEAR.	Quantity.	Value.	YEAR.	Quantity.	Value.
	Tons.	\$		Tons.	\$
1879.....	300	19,500	1888.....	4,404	255,007
1880.....	380	24,700	1889.....	6,113	426,554
1881.....	540	35,100	1890.....	9,860	1,260,240
1882.....	810	52,650	1891.....	9,279	999,878
1883.....	955	68,750	1892.....	6,082	390,462
1884.....	1,141	75,097	1893.....	6,331	310,156
1885.....	2,440	142,441	1894.....	7,630	420,825
1886.....	3,458	206,251	1895.....	8,756	368,175
1887.....	4,619	226,976			

758. In the Thetford, Black Lake, Coleraine and Danville districts, in the Eastern Townships, there were 16 companies at work, while two companies were at work in Ottawa County. The exports of asbestus in 1892 amounted to 7,316 tons, valued at \$514,512; in 1893 to 5,898 tons, valued