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Interview with the President of the Association des mines d'amiante du Québec

Mr. Michael Prus, President of Carey Canada, is the new President of the Association des mines d'amiante du Québec. As he begins his term of office, he willingly answers various questions regarding current issues related to the asbestos industry.

• In 1980, there was a fairly marked drop in deliveries. To what do you attribute this?

There are two causes, one economic and the other "psychological". In 1980, there was a worldwide economic slowdown which was more harshly felt by the industrialized nations; and these last are, in fact, our principal clients. So, recession hit asbestos just as it did all industries.

The United States, our major market, was the first to feel the impact, followed by Japan and Europe, which are also very important consumers of asbestos fibre.

Added to this general cause is one which is specific to the asbestos market, namely the negative publicity that has been undermining our product for several years now. In 1980, this adverse publicity began to affect the consuming public's behavior, fostering its mistrust of asbestos-based products and consequently forcing manufacturers to cut back their production or to use substitutes.

Concomitantly, certain countries stiffened their regulations on asbestos, and this naturally had its effect on the sales volume.



• Are you confident that, in time, asbestos can be completely rehabilitated?

For the short term, one must admit that it will not be easy to reverse public opinion and successfully promote the use of asbestos products, given that the opponent interests have been at work for several years.

For the medium term, if we work energetically, the situation should gradually improve, granted that we can count on the fact that the asbestos-cement industry, which accounts for 70% of our overall production, should continue to grow as is the case in the developing countries.

• Did this drop in deliveries affect all types of fibre equally?

The drop in deliveries occured in different ways depending on the category of fibre. The short fibre which is principally [illegible] was