

CASSIAR MINE

On March 8th Gary White and I visited the Cassiar Mine. We talked with geologists Mike Pennock and Tim Carew. Mike gave us a brief but good tour in the bitter wind swept open pit where winter still reigned. 1985 has seen a record snowfall for Cassiar - over 13 feet (nearly 4 metres)! Also, January 1985 was the warmest January on record. Mel Taylor also gave us an excellent tour of the mill.

The mine sits on top of McDame Mountain about 900 metres above the town of Cassiar. The mine has been a major contributor to B.C.'s economy. Since 1961 it has continued on a 24 hour basis, 7 days a week producing some of the world's best fibre. Unfortunately, the downturn in the world economy has necessitated short term (i.e. one to two month) closures over the summer since 1983. The ore is transported from the open pit down to the millsite (located in town) via a 4.8 km aerial tramline. Each tram car carries 2 tons. Approximately 270 tonnes per hour in 142 tram cars are transported. Approximately 3500 to 4000 tons are milled per day with an average annual total of approximately 100,000 tonnes.

During 1984 Brinco Mining Ltd., Cassiar Division, shipped Asbestos Fibre to 106 customers in 40 countries, for a total of 91,289 tonnes. The top five purchasing countries are Germany, Australia, U.S.A., U.K., and India (percent of total approximately 50%). In 1983 prices of the various grades of Cassiar's product ranged from \$500 up to \$2000 per tonne with a weighted average of \$875 per tonne. The sales outlook for 1985 is expected to remain at the present rate of production.

Cassiar still employes approximately 420 people on site with an average gross turnover of 20 per cent, the lowest over the past five years.

The schedule for mining from the open pit still calls for another 200 feet beneath the present operating level. Cassiar has budgeted \$2 million (part of the CMP 1985 partnership) during 1985 to be used in exploration around the McDame deposit on which reserves were doubled during the 1984 exploration program (to approximately 30 million tonnes).

Given favourable economic conditions, the mine could operate for more than 40 more years at presently planned rates of production. This scenario includes exhaustion of open pit reserves in the mid-1990's, and the conversion to a major underground operation on the McDame deposit. In addition, potential exists to reprocess the mine tailings over a five year period.