

## NOTES

### NICKEL EXPLORATION AT FALCONBRIDGE, CANADA

At a time when we are content with producing a trickle of ore from an ocean of potential reserve from our gold mines, here is an example of farsightedness, able planning and tremendous zeal from Falconbridge, Canada. According to a report in Candian Mining Journal of October 95, (v.116, No.5), Falconbridge has opened the Craig Nickel-Copper Mine in Canada recently. The owner is already aiming to find ore to replace the 12 million tonnes that are to be mined by the year 2004. Average grades are 2.10% Ni and 0.74% Cu.

Falconbridge has programmed to spend \$ 30 million on an ambitious deep exploration programme involving diamond drilling upto a depth of 1500 m. from underground stations. The initial programme will include 54,000 m of diamond drilling to be completed by September 97, i.e., at an average rate of 2700 metres per month. Another programme plans 84,000 m of drilling to end of June 1998.

This massive exploration programme exemplifies the Company's commitment to long-term strategic planning. The Craig operation is a fine example of the expertise Falconbridge has developed over many years of mining nickel in the Sudbury Basin. It has been designed to produce 1.3 million tonnes of ore in 1996.

The scenario in India is totally different. The budget allotted to the entire G.S.I. for the year 1995-96 is a meagre Rs. 125 crores. About 80% of this goes by way of wages and allowances and hardly any worthwhile amount is earmarked for exploration.

In the absence of interest shown by State and Central Governments in mineral exploration and development, the only alternative left is to attract private investment. Alas! there is no perceptible progress even after a lapse of 22 months from the date of the announcement of the liberalization policy in the mining sector. Inordinate delay in taking decisions at all levels have only served to discourage potential private investors, leading to stagnation.

The report on Falconbridge should open the eyes of our policy makers and planners into acting quickly with genuine interest in developing the rich mineral potential of the country.

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### INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON GEOLOGY AND EXPLORATION FOR PGE, RARE METAL AND RARE EARTH ELEMENTS, CALCUTTA, 6-7 FEBRUARY, 1996

This well conceived and organised workshop jointly by the Geological Survey of India (GSI), Atomic Minerals Division (AMD) and the Jadavpur University took place at the Indian Institute of Chemical Biology Auditorium, Calcutta, during 6-7 February, 1996. An Abstracts Volume containing 52 contributions was brought out on the occasion.