

ESSROC (con 4)

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Portland in 1834. He thought the grey color looked similar to buildings made of local stone.

In a service-oriented economy, Italcementi maintains a core of technical experts in Europe to assist both with production adjustments and improvements and customer advice.

"There are very few problems at this plant," said Callieri, who agreed that a plant could have a mechanical or human failure resulting in a bad batch, "but these people are very skilled and that hardly ever happens here."

Even if it does, there are usually ways to salvage it, rework it

or mix it with a higher grade.

The rumble of blasting in the nearby quarry of huge layers of limestone is one of the first steps in the Picton plant's process. That is trucked to the plant and crushed almost to powder, then mixed with chemical formulas to correct alumina and iron content and other ingredients such as sand, silica and clay.

The powder next heads off to a continuous kiln process of two or more hours, heat-treated at temperatures of 1,500 C, first in a 200-foot-high pre-heater for a few minutes for "decarbonization," then in a long, slow kiln. "That heat creates the action to turn the product into what we call clinker," he said.

The clinker, in nut-sized peb-

bles, is then ground into a fine dust.

Other than a shut-down of two to three weeks, usually in February, to overhaul the equipment and kilns, the plant operates around the clock, churning out about 737,000 tons per year.

Other than some steam or gas from the kiln process, "there is no waste," said Callieri. High-tech "electrostatic precipitators" filter out dust in the stack and that dust is recycled into more cement.

Coming to Picton by way of Italy and Puerto Rico, Callieri is delighted at his new posting here.

"I love all water sports and I have found a lovely home right on the water."

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