

## TORONTO STAR

Toronto Star

Business, Friday, April 29, 2005, p. E05

### Social activists protest **Alcan** project in India

Canadian Press

MONTREAL - **Alcan** Inc. yesterday named a new chief executive of its bauxite and alumina division, a business under fire from social activists for a major bauxite mine proposed for India.

Jacynthe Cote, 47, was introduced to shareholders at the annual meeting, where activists threw questions and accusations at chief executive officer Travis Engen, both for the India project and over **Alcan's** intentions at Kitimat, B.C.

Spokeswoman Anna Malla accused **Alcan** and Engen of colluding with local forces and of oppressing local Indian people who oppose the bauxite mining project in the province of Orissa.

"You have not secured the people's consent," Malla charged, saying the issue is hurting **Alcan's** worldwide reputation.

**Alcan** would own 45 per cent of the joint mining venture, with an Indian industrial group holding 55 per cent.

Engen admitted the project "is very troubled." At a demonstration in 2000 some protesters were killed.

Pre-development work involving local people and authorities has been going on for about 12 years, Engen said.

The project is under environmental review and requires proof that there is local support, he added.

"We'll only proceed when we have answers to all these fundamental questions," Engen later told reporters.

A delegation from Kitimat, B.C., including Mayor Rick Wosney, repeated their demands that **Alcan** invest in its old smelter at that town, and accused the company of selling energy from its dam there to the United States.

"**Alcan** is making huge profits selling off Canadian resources," Wosney said.

Engen said the Kitimat refinery is operating at 92 per cent of its capacity, while **Alcan** has a contractual obligation to sell surplus power to BC Hydro.

A union delegation from the Saguenay region of Quebec also demanded more investment in that area, where **Alcan** has most of its Canadian smelting capacity.

Cote, also named senior vice-president of **Alcan**, succeeds Michael Hanley, 39, who has become chief financial officer on an interim basis.

Cote, a chemist, joined **Alcan** in 1988, and has held a number of management positions in Quebec and England.

#### Illustration(s):

CHRISTINNE MUSCHI reuters **Alcan** Inc. chief executive Travis Engen speaks at the company's annual general meeting in Montreal yesterday. He faced criticism over a major project in India, and operations in B.C. and Quebec.

**Category:** Economy

**Uniform subject(s):** Metal processing industries

**Length:** Medium, 310 words

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Doc. : news-20050429-TS-0TS330983