BRITISH COLUMBIA CONTRIBUTES

Large Share of Canada's Mineral Production — New Railways and Mining Dividends.

The estimated mineral production in British Columbia during 1910 had a total value of $26,183,505. If the revised returns shall prove this estimate to be approximately correct, as is believed they will do, the total for the year will be the highest yet recorded in the history of mining in British Columbia, for it will compare favorably with that for 1907, which, at $25,882,560, has been the largest yearly total on record. So says Mr. Wm. Fleet Robertson, provincial mineralogist, in his preliminary review and estimate.

That province continues to maintain its average proportion of the mineral production of that of the whole of Canada. Placing the aggregate value of the production of the Dominion for the twenty-five years 1886-1910, included in the published official records, at $1,120,000,000 (which allows about $95,000,000 for 1910), it would appear that British Columbia may fairly claim to have produced between 27 and 28 per cent. of this large sum. The aggregate value of the mineral production of this province for all years to 1910, inclusive, is nearly $374,000,000. Deducting the total value of the minerals—chiefly for coal and placer gold—produced prior to 1886, which was nearly $64,000,000, British Columbia's approximate aggregate for the twenty-five years is left at $310,000,000, which is between 27 and 28 per cent. of that of the whole of Canada. It is a striking fact, as indicating the substantial increase in the value of the mineral production of the province in recent years as compared with that prior to 1906, that fully 40 per cent. of this large value is the production of the last five years, 1906-1910, while more than half—53.7 per cent.—is that of seven years, 1904-1910.

Mineral Production for Two Years.

The following table shows the quantities and value of the several minerals produced in the year 1909, and the estimated production in 1910. It may here be explained that the prices used in calculating the estimated value for 1910 of silver, lead, copper, and zinc are the average prices for eleven months, to the end of last November, less a deduction of 5 per cent. off for silver, 10 per cent. off for lead, and 15 per cent. off for zinc:—

	1909 Value	1910 Value		Increase or Dec.
Gold, placer........	$ 477,000	$ 482,000	+	$ 5,000
" lode	4,924,090	5,198,505	+	274,415
Total gold	$ 5,401,090	$ 5,680,505	+	$ 279,415
Silver	1,239,270	1,282,500	+	43,230
Lead	1,709,259	1,480,000	—	229,259
Copper	5,918,522	4,972,500	—	946,022
Zinc	400,000	184,000	—	216,000
Total metalliferous	$14,668,141	$13,599,505		$1,713,926
Coal	7,022,666	9,800,000	+	2,777,334
Coke	1,552,218	1,284,000	—	268,218
Building materials, etc.	1,200,000	1,500,000	+	300,000
Total value of production	$24,443,025	$26,183,505		$5,059,478
		Net increase for year.		1,740,480

These figures are summarized:—Net increase in coal and coke, $2,509,116; net increase in building materials, etc., $300,000; total, $2,809,116. Net decrease in metalliferous minerals, $1,068,636; net increase in year's production, $1,740,480.

Large Increase in Coal.

A comparison of the quantities of minerals produced in the respective years, as exhibited in the foregoing table, will serve to show that there appear to have been serious decreases in the production of lead, copper, and zinc, but these were more than compensated for in the unprecedented increase in that of coal. Never before in the history of coal-mining in the province has there been so large an increase made in a single year, the two nearest annual increases having been that of 350,000 tons in 1891 as compared with 1890, and of 323,000 tons in 1909 as compared with 1908. Last year's increase in net production of coal over that of 1909 is, however, greater than that of the two largest increases previously on record added together, or 794,000 tons in this one year as against 678,000 tons in those two years.

New railways were in course of construction in the Skeena country, Portland Canal, Vancouver Island, Fraser Valley, Similkameen, Boundary, and East Kootenay. All these will be of more or less benefit to mining in the several districts mentioned. Roads, trails, and bridges were built or improved in all the mining districts to an extent never before approached, and the Provincial Government thereby much facilitated the work of both prospectors and mine operators.

Finally, it is gratifying to note that several mining companies paid dividends in 1910. These were: Hedley Gold Mining Company, four quarterly distributions of profit and a bonus, totalling 14 per cent. of the issued capital, £1,200,000; Le Roi No. 2, Limited, three dividends of two shillings each per share on 120,000 shares; Crow's Nest Pass Coal Company, two dividends, each of 1 per cent.; Granby Consolidated M. S. & P. Company, one payment at the rate of 1 per cent. on about $14,850,000; and the Hastings (British Columbia) Exploration Syndicate, Limited, operating the Arlington gold-mine at Erie, Nelson Mining Division, a dividend of sixpence per share on 60,375 issued shares.

BRITISH COLUMBIA.

Boards of Trade Interview the Government—Reciprocal Trade with Australia—Oriental Trade for Western Millers—Many By-laws Passed.

(Staff Correspondence.)

Vancouver, January 21st.

Premier McBride's speech in the legislature on Wednesday was an excellent review of the present provincial situation. He outlined the progress that had been made in railway negotiations, despite the obstacles that had intervened, and announced that the whole of the line on Vancouver Island would be constructed within a few years.

The premier spoke at some length on the land policy of the government. This is a matter of vital importance at present, when people are looking for pre-emptions, and when settlers are treking westward. He pointed out that although the expense had been much greater than expected, the government had gone ahead with land surveys, and 796,000 acres were surveyed. These were reserved for the pre-emptor alone. The government was in favor of settling first the areas nearer to the lines of railway, rather than have settlers go into the far outlying districts, in advance of roads and transportation facilities. This would affect the standing of the province, which was particularly good, since development had gone along substantial lines. The premier showed that conditions were generally very satisfactory, with the prospect of continued prosperity.

Reciprocal Trade With Australia.

The suggestion that Canada should enter into reciprocal trade relations with Australia, similar to that existing with New Zealand, will doubtless be received with favor, since it should, if consummated, result in a greater interchange of products. Attention is being directed to Australia and New Zealand, as they affect Canada, and the action of Sir Wilfrid Laurier in opening negotiations with New Zealand for a direct steamship service will be approved in the West. Trade between Canada and New Zealand might reach considerable proportions if facilities of transport were available. The latter route is unlikely, since Australia's open confession that it did not want to assist in trade promotion between New Zealand and Canada. The past contains many instances of where trade was offered but could get no transportation. If a direct steamship line is established with New Zealand, Australia will be ready to negotiate for preferential trade relations with Canada, as the products of the Antipodean Islands are much the same.

Many Money By-laws Passed.

With nineteen money by-laws aggregating in amounts $3,471,000, the ratepayers of Vancouver had a varied assortment of expenditure to approve. They did their duty very well, defeating only three, one for $400,000 to build a bridge from Beattie street to Keefer street, thus providing a thoroughfare east and west parallel and close to Pender and Hastings streets; another for $500,000 for a bridge over False street to give another entrance into Kitsilano; and the third for $46,000, for the purchase of a block of land. The by-laws carried were: Three school by-laws aggregating $967,000; street improvements, $300,000; waterworks extensions and improvements, $400,000; opening and rough grading lanes, $50,000; public morgue, $25,000; extension to general hospital, $240,000; to purchase land for general hospital purposes, $30,500; improvement of parks, $60,000; exhibition purposes, $115,000; improvement of Clark Drive, $75,000; fire hall construction, $21,000; isolation hospital wharf, $7,000; Ward Five park site, $25,000; to purchase shares in the Burrard Inlet Tunnel & Bridge Company, which will construct bridge over Burrard Inlet to North Vancouver, $200,000.