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Editorials—	Page.
Miners and the War	453
The Nickel Commission	454
Correspondence: The Prospector's Difficulties	455
Vanadium: Its Chemical and Metallurgical Technology, by F. M. Turner, Jr.	457
Ventilating the World's Deepest Mine, by G. Chalmers	462
Mining in Newfoundland, by J. W. McGrath	466
Canadian Mining Institute—Western Branch	467
Ontario Nickel Commission	468
Radium from Carnotite	470
Smelting with Crude Petroleum, by A. B. Marquand ..	472
McIntyre Porcupine Mines, Ltd., Annual Report	475
Personal and General	479
Special Correspondence	480
Markets	484

MINERS AND THE WAR

The long threatened trouble in the coal mining districts of South Wales culminated in a strike which lasted only a few days. For weeks the mine owners and employees carried on a warfare which threatened to seriously interfere with the work of the British navy and of the armies in France.

It is said that the miners were dissatisfied because they believed the owners to be making large profits owing to the war. Naturally enough they desire to share in the profits.

It is not surprising that the miners asked for increased pay; but it is almost incredible that they should actually quit work in such a national crisis. Other miners have been playing a noble part in the war. Over two hundred thousand are enlisted and those at the front have proven that the miner is above the average as a soldier. With so many on active service it is necessary that those who remain at the collieries should work steadily. Even at best the output is lower than it should be and some authorities have advocated that miners should be brought back from the front in order that the output be increased. It must therefore have been very disheartening to all who have the interests of the British Empire at heart to learn that the coal miners of Wales had taken advantage of the embarrassing condition of affairs and gone on strike.

As a result of the strike not only was Britain threatened with a shortage of coal but France, robbed of her coal mines by the invading Huns, was placed in the same position. A prolonged strike in the Welsh coal districts at this time could do more damage to the Allies than could a score of German army corps.

Fortunately the disaster has been averted and, inspired by the words of Lloyd George, the miners have not only gone back to work, but they have done so with a better idea of the responsibility which rests upon them. A week has been lost; but the miners have been given an inkling of the danger which confronts the Empire, and we confidently expect soon to learn that they are working as diligently at their places in the mines as are the miners in the trenches in Flanders.

The announcement that the McIntyre Mining Company has purchased a controlling interest in the property of the Pearl Lake Mining Company at Timmins will be well received by those who wish to see the properties developed. Whether shareholders have cause for joy or sorrow depends on the price paid.

Col. Leekie, of the 16th Battalion, is distinguishing himself at the front. He is now reported to be making experiments in England with an apparatus which he has devised to combat the effects of poisonous gas.