

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MINISTER OF
MINES FOR THE YEAR 1904.

THE Annual Report of the Minister of Mines of British Columbia for the year 1904 has just been issued, its publication during the earlier half of the year comparing favourably with the customary much later date at which similar reports of other provinces or countries are made available to the public. Not only has there been commendable dispatch shown in its completion, but it is distinctly more useful by reason of its containing numerous special reports from the provincial mineralogist and provincial assayer, than reports of previous years, as a means of disseminating thoroughly dependable information relating to all, or nearly all, of the chief mining districts of the province, and therefore more valuable to all interested in the mining and metallurgical industries of the province.

From the report on the work of the Bureau of Mines for the year it is ascertained that the provincial mineralogist, in addition to performing his varied office duties, spent 160 days in the field examining mining districts and taking notes to be later prepared for publication in the Annual Report now under notice, while the provincial assayer similarly spent 40 days in the field. The mines visited by the provincial mineralogist were situated in the following mining divisions: Nelson (including Ymir), Ainsworth, Slocan, Slocan City, Fort Steele (East Kootenay), Atlin, New Westminster (Howe Sound) and Victoria. The provincial assayer made a special examination of the stone quarries of the coast, and examined mining properties in New Westminster division. The information obtained by these officials, as published, constitutes one of the leading features of the Report, sharing with the full and carefully-prepared statistical tables the interest and usefulness to the public it will be found to possess. Other noticeable features are the fully detailed reports of several of the gold commissioners—of Cariboo, Atlin, Nelson and Greenwood, respectively.

The illustrations are more numerous than in earlier reports, and they cover a wide range of subjects. Prominent among them, from a practical rather than an artistic point of view, are the several "flow sheets," drawn by the provincial mineralogist, which will serve to convey to the uninitiated an intelligent idea of the movement of ore in its passage through the concentration appliances of the silver-lead concentrating mills. These diagrams are the result of much careful work and will doubtless be regarded by many as a distinctly useful supplement to the reports they accompany. The half-tones are chiefly illustrative of the properties visited by the officials above-mentioned, and they are printed with the extreme care and excellent effect always characteristic of the work of Mr. W. H. Clark, foreman of the press room of the government printing office. Some of these views are decidedly striking and well-finished, notably that used as a frontispiece. The views of coast stone quarries should attract general attention to the occurrence of much superior building

material under exceptionally advantageous conditions as regards cheap transportation.

The index is more complete than in reports of other years, and there has been added a "Table of Contents" to facilitate ready reference, while the "Library Catalogue Slips" show a recognition of the value of having the report promptly catalogued and placed on library shelves.

With so much of interest to choose from, together with the desirability of making the choice general rather than particular, it has not been practicable to quote from the report to any considerable extent descriptions of individual properties, as would have been done had sufficient space been available, consequently this month's MINING RECORD presents chiefly the statistical and general review features of the report, to which have been added extracts relating to the newer properties or industries. Prominence has been given to the descriptions of the stone quarries and the plant for the manufacture of Portland cement, the importance of the development of the associated non-metallic mineral resources of the coast fully warranting this. The notes on the Britannia mine, as quoted, do not do justice to the provincial mineralogist's report on that property, want of space having necessitated the omission from our quotation of much connecting detail. Among other extracts as indicating the gradual development of the minor mineral resources of the province, are those relating to scheelite, magnesite, fluor spar, etc.

It is unnecessary to here make more than very brief comment on the increased total mineral production and the general improvement in the condition of the mining and smelting industries. These are plainly exhibited in "Progress of Mining," "General Mining Developments" and the statistical tables printed elsewhere in this issue. The increase in total value of mineral production in 1904 as compared with 1903 was \$1,481,405, and in tonnage of ore produced, 175,433 tons. While not equal to expectations, this increase is a substantial and gratifying one, the more so since there appears to be good reason to regard it as but a new beginning in the increase of development and expansion of production, as exemplified by the results already attained this year. While therefore, there is ample ground for satisfaction with the advance made in 1904, as shown in the comprehensive survey contained in the Annual Report under review, it is especially pleasing to find the outlook for a still more substantial advance during the year 1905 undoubtedly promising.

The Denver, Colorado, special correspondent of the *New York Engineering and Mining Journal* has communicated to that journal the names of nine companies which have decided to file separate suits against the Western Federation of Miners as an organization, and against its officers and prominent members individually, involving about \$1,000,000. Some of the leading firms of attorneys of Colorado have been retained in these cases.