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ONTARIO'S METAL MINING INDUSTRY.

Northern Ontario mining districts are constantly giving evidence of the wonderful wealth that is stored up in the hinterland. From time to time new discoveries are made and the interest aroused becomes keener. On many occasions it has been our pleasure to tell in these pages of new developments that ensure the future of mining in Ontario. At no time has the outlook been so bright as now. We are devoting this number of the Journal largely to Northern Ontario mining in order to call special attention to conditions in the Province's chief metal producing districts.

There have been occasions during the past few years when we have had to record great activity at Sudbury nickel-copper mines, Poreupine and Kirkland Lake gold mines or Cobalt silver mines, but never were all in such good condition at the same time. In the early days of the war, when the bottom fell out of the metal markets and pessimism prevailed in industrial districts, we were able to point with satisfaction to the steady operation of the big mines at Poreupine, for whose product there was of course always a market at the old price. Increase in cost of supplies and shortage of labor held back the gold mining companies in 1916 and no startling production record was made; but even under adverse conditions the gold mining industry was being placed on a firmer footing by improved physical condition of several mines. Now that the labor crisis has been passed, sooner than was expected, we may properly expect greater activity in the gold districts than has yet been witnessed.

In the first days of the war the need for increased production of nickel and copper was not recognized and we have to look back at the strange spectacle of decrease in production as the first result of the war on this basic industry. Experience gained as the war has gone on has shown clearly that there should never have been decrease in output; but that, on the contrary, every effort should have been made to increase production. The mistake was made however; the market for the metals having temporarily disappeared, employees were dismissed and the output kept low. The error was not peculiar to companies operating in Ontario, for copper producers throughout North America cut their output in half. The conditions at Sudbury during the first few months of the war were distressing, for men were being thrown out of employment at a time when their services would have been of great value if the need for munitions had been recognized. Gradually, after much valuable time had been lost, the market improved, accumulated stocks were sold and production was increased. Then began