

POOR DOCUMENT M C 2 0 3 5

THE EVENING TIMES AND STAR, ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, MAY 26, 1923

COAL ENOUGH IN THE U. S. TO LAST FOR 6,033 YEARS

This is Exclusive of Alaskan
Deposits

Editor Decries Pessimism—
Points to Vast Extension
of Water Power and the
Growing Use of Oil as
Fuel.

If coal is consumed at the present rate, it will be 6,033 years before the available supply in the United States is used up, despite the many recent gloomy predictions of approaching exhaustion, according to estimates compiled by R. Z. Virgin, editor of the Coal Trade Journal of Pittsburgh.

This is not taking into consideration the vast deposits that lie so deep beneath the surface that present known mining methods are not suited to mining it. Neither does it take into consideration the vast deposits recently discovered in Alaska. These Alaskan deposits are available for shipment to the Western States. This will eliminate the necessity for shipments from Eastern Coast mines across the continent. It has been figured the Alaskan deposits are enough to supply the States west of the Rockies for at least 1,000 years. Much of it is good for coke making and roughly estimated to exceed in volume the original Pennsylvania deposits.

Other fields not thoroughly explored and which contain coal deposits are Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona and the Rocky Mountain section. These deposits will considerably swell the original estimates.

Mr. Virgin also points out that there is no doubt will be a vast quantity of power and by the development of water power and through recent discoveries of coal in other countries, which will be used to supply their needs and thus lessen the drain on the country's resources. He also shows that consumption and production are not now growing as they have in the last century. From 1820 to 1910 consumption grew from 200 to 500 per cent, while in the decade from 1910 to 1920 the gain was only 20 per cent. In 1920 the United States produced the largest amount of coal in its history, 586,000,000 metric tons of 2,204,662 pounds. The very latest estimates of the United States Geological Survey show there are now available 3,535,303,000 metric tons of lignite, sub-bituminous, bituminous, semi-bituminous, anthracite and semi-anthracite coal. If coal is consumed at the present rate of 586,000,000 tons a year, it may be expected to last 6,033 years.

Features of Distribution.

"An interesting feature not generally known is the fact that the United States produces 50 per cent of the world's output," says Mr. Virgin. "Great Britain produces about 25 per cent, Germany about 6 per cent, Austria-Hungary about 3 per cent, and France about 2 per cent. All other countries producing coal produce a combined tonnage of about 14 per cent."

The distribution of this tonnage is roughly estimated as follows: Household consumers, about 10 per cent; industrial enterprises, about 2 per cent; railroads, about 28 per cent; public utilities and all other purposes combined, about 50 per cent.

"It is true the coal industry throughout the United States has been heralded far and wide as the most wasteful industry in the country. This accusation was not taken in the proper manner. The wastefulness was not because of wilful extravagance, but rather the result of the bringing out of more modern and efficient machinery. This evolution and revolution in some instances made former mining methods and practices appear wasteful. It would be the height of folly to think that American mine owners were willfully wasting their investment principal."

"Much has been accomplished by science and research in the recovery and reclamation of coal formerly thought of no value. Thousands of tons of low grade coal have been washed, sized and treated in various ways so as to make the recovery a profitable business. In

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addition, research has proven that much low grade coal can be made of much value. Some waste coal, or rather known as "cannel coal," has been used by the United States Bureau of Mines experiment station at Pittsburgh. In a recent experiment in West Virginia under a Belgian process it was discovered that by heating freshly mined coal in an oven at low temperature it was made to yield ten gallons of gasoline per ton of coal treated. The residue of the coal was not used up by this process, and really very little of the coal's value as a fuel was lost.

"It has been demonstrated many times by Government mining engineers

that coal dust when mixed with air

forms a very explosive mixture, especially when held in suspension in moving air currents within the mine or within the bunkers of vessels or power houses.

"Recent practice takes advantage of this fact. Coal is being pulverized and fed into the furnaces by mechanical stokers. This practice conserves coal, gives intense heat and is a cheap method. To assist in the conservation movement, mine owners are using their very best brains and talent, and are fully cognizant of the tendency toward the use of pulverized coal."

"Within the United States are millions of undeveloped water horsepower going to waste yearly. Recent years show a very marked increase in the harnessing of these huge power possibilities. In the United States this increase is shown by activity in the development of the great potential power of the Colorado, Columbia and St. Lawrence Rivers. The horsepower permits for proposed project in 1921 and 1922 were 1,000,000 horsepower. If the demand keeps up, the National Electrical Light Association figures that new light and power plants to be completed within the next ten years will require \$60,000,000,000 of new capital."

"If these huge hydro-electric generating plants are completed, the available water power fully utilized, and the industry's demand continues to increase in the same proportion (and all the indications point to even a greater demand), the saving of coal is estimated at 600,000,000 tons per year. This would release 1,000,000 railroad cars for other purposes. It would also take care of the original coal deposits, as the requirement would not be so great, and coal deposits available would last much longer than originally estimated."

"With the possibilities of the foregoing practices spreading the lifetime of the present coal resource over a

longer period of time, recent discoveries of coal in Siberia, Japan, China, India, Australia and New Zealand will no doubt fill the Far East markets in due time, and they would naturally and automatically be lost to the United States. This is but the natural outcome of business progress.

"It can be safely stated that alarming predictions of exhaustion of our coal are not founded on facts in the case. We need not fear British output conservation at the expense of ours. We produce twice as much coal yearly as Great Britain, but in proportion to our natural resources the comparison of exhaustion dates leaves Britain's output exhausted before the mining of the United States coal is hardly commenced."

Great Britain must continue to produce her present output of coal in order to find employment for her people and to supply her industries. The production of a billion tons yearly in the United States will not help Britain much in the idea of waiting till our coal is exhausted."

"When we stop to think of the vast tonnage available, and its possible length of life as over 6,000 years, why should we worry over matters so unimportant?"

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