

British Columbia.

British Columbia has an area of 383,000 square miles. Within its boundaries ores of gold, silver, copper, lead zinc, and iron are found. Coal is mined extensively in the extreme east and west of the province. A measure of the growth of its mineral industry is afforded by comparing the total value of the mineral output of 1890 with that of the past year. The returns for 1890 give a total of \$2,608,803; for 1907 the corresponding figures are \$25,882,560. These returns give, in brief, the history of mining and metallurgy in British Columbia during the past 17 years—a record of constant growth and progress. With the exception of the year 1901, when the output was abnormally high, each year's production has been steadily greater than that of its predecessor.

Between 1820 and 1825 a botanist named Douglas discovered the Blue Bell mine (silver-lead) on Kootenay Lake. Coal was discovered at Fort Rupert, Vancouver Island, in 1835, but, after being opened by the Hudson's Bay Company, these deposits were abandoned in 1851, and the Nanaimo seams, also on Vancouver Island, were worked. The Nanaimo collieries produced coal from that date on to the present.

Small finds of gold on Vancouver Island and Queen Charlotte Island attracted some attention between 1850 and 1857; but these bore no fruit. Nor were subsequent rumours of discoveries on the Skeena River and at other places confirmed.

But between 1855 and 1857 discoveries of placer gold were made on the Thompson, Fraser and Columbia Rivers. Thousands of prospectors and camp followers rushed from all quarters to the Fraser. In 1858 a yield of placer gold worth \$705,000 was obtained. In 1863 this had risen to nearly four million dollars.

Meanwhile, 1861, Williams and Lightning Creeks and other rich creeks in Cariboo were discovered. One claim on Williams Creek gave a maximum daily yield of \$6,544. Other even higher yields are recorded.

The northerly gold fields of the Omineca and Cassiar districts were discovered in 1869 and 1874 respectively, and temporarily brought up the decreasing annual yield of the province. A substantial increase during the period 1899-1904 has been followed by a slight falling off in the last three years.

The construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway opened up the southern part of the province. Lode mining may be said to have begun at about the same time (1886) that trains commenced to run regularly between the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of Canada. In the West Kootenay district valuable discoveries of ores were made in this year. Branch lines of railway were at once constructed, and steamer service was established on the lakes and rivers. The East Kootenay district, various parts of the Yale district, and several