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PROGRESS IN ALASKA

The report of the Mines Inspector for the Territory of Alaska has just been issued. The period covered is the fiscal year ended June 30, 1912.

The figures of production, we note, are carried only to the end of the calendar year 1911.

The total value of the mineral production of Alaska during the year 1911, was \$20,650,005. By far the greater proportion of this was gold, which metal was mined to the value of nearly \$17,000,000. The production of copper, however, has grown very markedly, its total value reaching the respectable sum of \$3,666,584. The silver production was of relatively small value, and coal practically nothing. As a matter of fact, only 900 tons of coal were produced in Alaska, while practically 90,000 tons were purchased from British Columbia. The production of other minerals, such as marble, gypsum, tin, lead, etc., aggregated a value of \$176,942.

Of the gold, approximately \$12,500,000 was derived from placers, four and a quarter million from silicious ores, and \$86,000 from copper ores. After reaching a maximum value of about \$22,000,000 in the year 1906, the gold production of Alaska has fluctuated between a gross value of sixteen and twenty million dollars.

The silver production has gone up from about 50,000 ounces to a present output of nearly half a million ounces. While the copper production took a tremendous leap as between the years 1910 and 1911, in the former year, 1910, the production was four and a quarter million pounds, in 1912 the production was 27,267,871 pounds.

The Yukon basin is still the largest regional source of gold, with the Pacific Coast belt coming next, and the Seward Peninsula third.

It may be noted that the consumption of crude oil and naphtha has increased markedly in the last five years. In 1911 more than 18,000,000 gallons of crude oil, and a million and a quarter gallons of naphtha were shipped from other parts of the United States to Alaska.

It is gratifying to notice that the inspector reports the organization of mine rescue and first aid teams on Douglas Island. The work has also been taken up at a number of lode mines.

Considering all the conditions of work, the scale of wages is relatively low. The miners in the Fairbanks district get from \$3.50 to \$5.00 a day and board. At Nome the rates are higher, except during the winter. The ten-hour shift predominates. There is little, if any, labour trouble.