

COAL MINING IN BRITISH COLUMBIA IN 1915

By E. Jacobs.

The gross production of coal in British Columbia in 1915, that is including the coal made into coke, was approximately 2,308,000 short tons. It being the official custom of the province, however, to record production in tons of 2,240 lb., it will be more convenient to make comparisons in that measure. The quantity given above is subject to revision when the final returns shall come in, an estimate having been made of the December production in arriving at the total here used as representing the production of 1915. The following table affords opportunity for making comparisons between the totals of output of six successive years:

Gross output in	Tons of 2,240 lb.
1915	2,060,804
1914	2,166,428
1913	2,570,760
1912	3,025,709
1911	2,297,718
1910	3,139,235

The year 1910 was the "record year" of the coal production of British Columbia; since then conditions have been in one way or another unfavorable to a correspondingly large yearly output—large for the province—being made. For eight months of 1911 the Crowsnest District collieries were closed, owing to non-agreement between the operators and the mine-workers relative to wages, etc.; the result, so far as production was concerned, was a decrease of 941,000 tons as compared with the 1910 output of that district. For several months of 1912 there was labor trouble at the mines of the Canadian Collieries (Dunsmuir) Limited, with a resultant decrease in output of coal. In the spring of 1913 the United Mine Workers of America determined to force an issue and so called a strike at all the coal mines on Vancouver Island, so there was a decrease of 616,000 tons in that year's production in the Coast district as compared with that of 1911 when there was not any similar obstacle in the way of production. The reasons for a further decrease in the total output in 1914, as stated in the official "Annual Report of the Minister of Mines" included the following: "The decreased coal output is undoubtedly entirely attributable to the war, not acting directly, but through the allied industries which serve as customers for the colliery products, an illustration of the interlocking of the modern commercial business. In the interior of the province the effect of the war was first felt in the complete demoralization of the metal markets, which are essentially world markets. This led to the immediate shutting down of all the larger copper mines and smelteries, thus removing an important factor in the market for coal and coke. In turn, this reacted upon the volume of freight to be handled by the railways, causing thereby a very great reduction in the consumption of fuel in the locomotives. . . . In the Coast district the war made itself felt through different channels, as there were not any smelteries in operation there, but the activity of German cruisers so affected trans-Pacific shipping as to greatly reduce the quantity of coal used for this purpose. . . . It is claimed that much more coal could have been produced by Vancouver Island collieries had there been a demand for it."

As to 1915, the chief loss in production was in the Crowsnest district, caused in large measure by the Hosmer mines having been closed and by a lessened output from the Corbin colliery, these together showing a decrease of 123,825 tons, against which there was an increase of 18,607 tons from the Crow's Nest Pass Coal Company's mines, leaving a net decrease of 105,218 tons. This company now has some of its mines in such good condition that it could have produced, without difficulty, had there been a market for it, fully twice as much coal as it did. There was a generally reduced output from the relatively small mines of Nicola and Similkameen districts, their total production having been only 101,060 tons as compared with 138,931 tons in 1914. These mines are at a disadvantage in being situated at a comparatively long distance from populous or manufacturing centres. The production of several of the Vancouver Island mines was smaller than in 1914, the Vancouver-Nanaimo Co.'s output having been 61,000 tons less; that of the Canadian Collieries Company's Comox mines 34,000 tons less, and that of the Pacific Coast Coal Mines, Ltd.'s South Wellington mine (which was flooded for several months) nearly 26,000 tons. Against these decreases there was an increase of nearly 101,000 tons from the Western Fuel Co.'s mines, of which 28,000 tons was from its new Reserve Shaft mine; 35,000 tons from the Extension Colliery mines of the Canadian Collieries, Ltd., and 22,500 from the new Morden mine of the Pacific Coast Coal Mines, Ltd. The net result was an increase of about 37,500 tons as compared with the output of 1914, the totals for the two years having been approximately 1,109,800 long tons in 1915 against 1,072,300 tons in 1914.

Production of Coal in British Columbia in 1915.

	Tons of 2,240 lb.
Vancouver Island:	
Canadian Collieries (Dunsmuir) Limited	
Comox Mines (Cumberland)	360,410
Extension Mines	164,365
Western Fuel Co—	
Nanaimo Mines	382,604
Reserve Shaft Mine	28,866
Pacific Coast Mines, Ltd.—	
South Wellington	105,000
Morden Shaft Mine	22,500
Vancouver-Nanaimo Coal Mining Co.	46,034
	1,109,779
Nicola:	
Middlesboro Collieries	54,500
Inland Coal and Coke Co.	32,820
Pacific Coast Colliery Co. of B. C.	1,065
Similkameen:	
Princeton Coal and Land Co.	12,675
Southeast Kootenay:	
Crow's Nest Pass Coal Co.	707,010
Corbin Coal and Coke Co.	52,955
	849,965

Gross production of coal 2,060,804

Of this coal, about 409,000 tons was made into coke—nearly 360,000 tons at the Crow's Nest Pass Coal Co.'s ovens at Fernie and Michel, Southeast Kootenay, and