

INTRODUCTION.

In examining the attached table of the Mineral Production of Canada for the past eleven years, the following important features relating to Canada's mineral development will be noticed.

In 1886 the total mineral production of the country as per direct returns, supplemented by close estimates where complete returns could not be obtained, was valued at a little over ten million dollars. In 1896 the value of Canada's mineral production had increased 125 per cent or to over twenty-two and a half million dollars. Taking the data given for the United States in the volume of, the "Mineral Industry," issued by the Engineering and Mining Journal of New York, we find that in a similar period the increase has been only in the neighbourhood of 40 per cent. The mineral production of the United States, however, is of course vastly greater than that of Canada, the latter amounting in 1896 to but $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of the former. The relative per capita production of minerals for the two countries is as follows, viz., for Canada about \$4.50 and for the United States about \$8. The rapid growth noted above is, however, a most encouraging feature and the present outlook for mineral discovery and development in Canada would seem to promise a rapid rate of increase for many years to come. The main part of this increase must of course be in those minerals which permit of being exported and sold in foreign markets, as the home market must necessarily be limited and grow slowly in a country with so small a population, and where even that small number of people are scattered over so large an extent of territory. This necessarily influences in an important way the question of distribution, enhancing considerably the cost of carriage from producer to consumer, and even rendering many of our deposits of the lower priced minerals unworkable at a profit at present. Great improvements have been made in this respect of late years and others are contemplated in the near future which will bring some of our most promising mineral districts within economically reachable distance of extensive markets and help considerably towards the expected general growth of the industry.

It is interesting to note the proportions contributed by the various minerals towards the grand total, and their arrangement according to their importance as in the following table brings out some interesting points.