

# Mineral Output of British Columbia in 1916

Revised Figures of Provincial Mineralogist Give Production of 1916 as \$42,290,462—Review of the Year's Operations.

Revised figures of the value of the mineral output of British Columbia in 1916 are given in the annual report of the Department of Mines just off the Government presses. The total value of the products of the mines, as estimated by Mr. W. Fleet Robertson, Provincial Mineralogist, was \$42,290,462, compared with \$29,447,508 in 1915 and with \$32,440,800 in 1912, the best previous year in the history of the industry in the Province.

At the beginning of the present year Mr. Robertson issued an advance bulletin in which he estimated last year's production at \$42,970,047. His revised figures show a falling off of approximately \$700,000 from those figures, but still indicate a most satisfactory condition in the mining industry, the year's final figures being an increase of no less than 44 per cent. over the aggregate value of the 1915 output and 30 per cent. greater than the best previous yearly record in the history of the Province.

The quantity and value of the mineral products last year were as follows:

Mineral	Quantity	Value
Gold, placer .....	29,025 oz.	\$ 580,500
Gold, lode .....	221,932 oz.	4,587,334
Silver .....	3,301,923 oz.	2,059,739
Lead .....	48,727,516 lbs.	3,007,462
Copper .....	65,379,364 lbs.	17,784,494
Zinc .....	37,168,980 lbs.	4,043,985
Coal .....	2,084,093 tons	7,294,325
Coke .....	267,725 tons	1,606,350
Miscellaneous .....		1,326,273
<b>Total .....</b>		<b>\$42,290,462</b>

According to mining districts the output of minerals last year compared with that of the previous year as follows:

	1916	1915
Cariboo .....	\$ 778,157	\$ 885,502
Cassiar .....	7,210,949	4,420,988
East Kootenay .....	6,810,926	4,653,836
West Kootenay .....	9,101,905	7,308,793
Boundary-Trail .....	7,243,560	5,470,689
Lillooet .....	65,457	25,643
Coast .....	11,079,508	6,682,057
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>\$42,290,462</b>	<b>\$29,447,508</b>

There was a total of 3,188,865 tons of ore shipped during the year from 169 shipping mines, 81 of which shipped over 100 tons, and they employed a total of 5,254 men, 3,276 below and 1,978 above ground. There were 86 non-shipping mines listed, of which 27 were working and 59 idle, 139 men being employed.

Some idea of the importance of the mining industry in British Columbia may be had from the fact that the gross value of the output for all years up to the end of 1916 was \$558,560,715, coal mining leading with an aggregate total of \$165,829,315, followed by copper at \$114,559,364, then lode gold at \$91,350,784, and next in order placer gold at \$74,620,103. In 1916 gold production decreased in value \$170,100. While silver showed a falling off of 64,583 ounces, the total value was \$470,748 greater than the previous year, owing to higher prices of the metal, and lead increased 2,223,926 pounds and \$1,068,262 in value, due also to an increase in value of the metal. Copper established a record in both output and value, increasing 8,460,954 pounds, or about 14.8 per cent., and \$7,948,994, or 80 per cent in value. The production of coal showed an increase of 472,964 tons and \$1,655,373 in value. Of the total of 2,485,580 tons of coal mined in the Province, the Vancouver Island collieries produced 1,492,761 tons.

The Crow's Nest district collieries produced 240,121 tons of coke, compared with 27,604 tons produced by the

Vancouver Island plants. The consumption of coal in the portion of British Columbia served by the Island mines increased 189,817 tons, or about 38 per cent. over the preceding year, and the amount exported to the United States was 183,930 tons greater. Some 6,166 tons were exported to other countries.

In his review of the mining situation in the Province during the past year, Mr. Robertson states:

"The year 1916 was a record for mining in British Columbia, all branches of the industry, excepting gold and the building materials, showing increased production over that of the previous year. The uncertainty of war conditions during 1915 was not such a prominent feature in 1916, and steady operations were general throughout the year.

"The continued enormous and ever-increasing demand for shells of all kinds for the Allies has continued the great consumption of copper, lead and zinc, with the result that the market prices of these metals remained at an abnormally high level all year.

"During the last half of 1915 the market prices of metals were high, but, as it was thought these prices might drop at any time, the main stimulating effect on mining was only to increase production at the existing mines and did not cause much development of new properties. With, however, the continuation of these high prices and the predictions by many eminent authorities that at least reasonably high metal prices might be expected to continue for some time, the year 1916 saw a great increase of new development.

"All over the Province old properties which had been abandoned, or closed, were re-examined and in many instances work commenced and ore shipments made. Along the Coast a number of copper prospects which have lain dormant for years have been taken up under options and work on them started. Capital for these new enterprises is being obtained in Vancouver, Victoria, Spokane, Edmonton and from the large moneyed centres of the United States.

"Owing to the fact that so many men in the Province have enlisted, the problem of getting sufficient labor has often been serious, and there is no doubt that with ample labor a still larger production would have been made. Prospecting has suffered more than mining, as the prospectors as a class have responded very readily to the recruiting sergeant, with the result that prospecting has been practically at a standstill. Furthermore, the high wages being paid at the mines has retained many who might otherwise have engaged in prospecting during the summer time. A great need for the future of the mining industry is a large influx of prospectors to the Province, and it may confidently be expected that the free and adventurous life of prospecting will make a strong appeal to many of the returned soldiers.

"The outputs from metal mining and coal mining are intimately related to one another, as any increase in production from the former causes an increased production from the latter for fuel for smelting, power and transportation purposes. As might be expected, then, with a largely increased production of metalliferous minerals in 1916, there is also an increased output of coal and coke. On the other hand, a stoppage of production of coal and coke immediately curtails the metalliferous production.

"Had it not been that the Crow's Nest Collieries, through a series of mishaps—accompanied by a serious shortage of labor due to the war, followed by a labor strike—were unable to make as large an output as expected and intended, the coal and coke production would have been much greater; but as it was, there resulted such a shortage of coke as to partially close the copper-smelters, and these in turn compelled the copper mines to very much curtail their outputs. But for these untoward circumstances it is certain that the output for 1916 would have approached it \$50,000,000 mark.