PRELIMINARY REVIEW AND ESTIMATE

—OF—

MINERAL PRODUCTION FOR THE YEAR 1915.

THIS bulletin has been prepared before the receipt of the official reports for the year 1915 of the Gold Commissioners and Mining Recorders of the Province, and the customary returns of mineral production annually made by managers of mines and reduction-works; consequently, it must necessarily be regarded as being simply a preliminary review of the progress of the past year, together with an estimate of the quantities and value of the several mineral products of the Province, which it is believed will prove to be approximately correct.

The accompanying table shows an estimated mineral production during 1915 of a total value of $29,200,584. It will be seen that the total value of the production of 1915 as estimated is some $2,010,739 greater than that of 1914, which, considering the times, must be regarded as a very encouraging showing.

The year 1915 opened under very inauspicious conditions as far as mining was concerned; the war had only gotten fairly started, and at that time the final issue was in doubt, while the duration of the conflict was then quite unknown.

Under these circumstances it is not to be wondered at that the metal market was so uncertain that producers felt timid as to the future, particularly as the opening months of the year saw the prices of all the metals, except zinc, much below normal.

Apparently no one foresaw or appreciated the trend of modern warfare, with its unprecedented use of artillery, nor realized the tremendous amounts of metal that would be consumed thereby.

How great this consumption of the metals has been can scarcely be appreciated when expressed in figures, but some conception of the enormous expenditure of metals can be obtained from a calculation published by the *Mining and Scientific Press*, and based upon French official statements, that 4,5[illegible] shells were used by the section of the French Army in Champagne during a four days' bombardment along a twenty-mile front.

The editor, T. A. Rickard, calculates that these shells contained about 18,000,000 lb. of copper, 30,000,000 lb. of lead, and 8,000,000 lb. of zinc. To apply these quantities to the total output of British Columbia made during the year 1914, it will be seen that the year's output of copper would have lasted that small section of the French Army about ten days, the lead-output for seven days, and the zinc-output for slightly less than the four days.

The close of the year 1914 found many of the mines closed down and most of the large producers restricting their output under a common agreement to so do.

Then came the enormous demand for shells of all sorts, from all the Allies, necessitating the use of an amount of copper, lead, zinc, and other metals which soon depleted the stocks, so that by May and June the prices of the metals began to soar, and all the mines that were in a position promptly to supply the demand were pushed to make as great an output as possible.

These higher prices for metals continuing throughout the remainder of the year, stimulated the mineral production very greatly and rendered the margin of profit on production much higher.