

POSSIBLE ECONOMIES IN PRODUCTION OF MINERALS OF CANADA

There is this difference between mineral resources and other natural resources, that while a forest cut down may be replanted, an exhausted soil, refertilized and a river or lake depleted of fish, restocked, an ore deposit once worked out can never be recovered.

We allow ourselves great latitude of language when we speak of this or that deposit as being inexhaustible. The economic mineral deposits accessible to man are finite in quantity, and the time required for their exhaustion depends solely upon the rapidity with which they are exploited.

The immense pressure exerted by the acquired needs of modern civilization, reinforced by the commercial spirit of the age, will render futile any effort that might be made to curtail the exploitation of the mineral resources of the world. We can pass no laws for a close season in mining, during which mines or smelters should cease operations. All that we can do is to employ such methods in mining that no waste occur. The mine must be worked out; nothing valuable must be left behind. Existing methods require to be perfected, or new ones invented, to enable us to discover new mineral deposits at present buried out of sight. The problem of successfully substituting for certain vanishing resources others which are still abundant and capable of taking their place, will have to be solved. Metallurgical investigation must be directed to the invention of processes which are capable of handling economically lower and lower grades of ore. Much is being done in these directions, as will appear later.

Only a few years ago ironmasters on this continent would hardly look at an iron ore if it contained less than 62% of metallic content; now an ore of 50% is gladly accepted.

Iron—The question of the world's supply of iron is of such grave importance that the International Geological Congress has invited some twenty-six different countries—Canada among the number—to prepare estimates of their respective iron ore resources to be presented at their meeting at Stockholm next summer. This action of the International Geological Congress is an indication of the general anxiety and uneasi-

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