

STATISTICS OF CANADA'S COAL TRADE.

Coal, which is now the most valuable, as it is also the most interesting of natural products, has risen into importance as fuel within a comparatively recent period. Whatever smelting of metallic ores, or forging of metals, was done in early times, was effected by wood. Traces of charcoal hearths and furnaces operated by the Romans have been found in England and Europe. Although they knew where coal existed, they ignored it as fuel. For domestic purposes and the lighter processes of metal workers coal was used in England and Scotland in the thirteenth century; but it was not until early in the seventeenth that it was utilized for smelting iron. In 1700, there were 20,000 tons of pig iron smelted in English forests, from charcoal, none of these furnaces now exist.

The use of coal was known to the early navigators of the old world, and one writer speaks of coal being seen at Cape Breton about the time when Jacques Cartier saw the coast. Had its power been realized, Nova Scotia would have been much earlier developed. It was not, however, until 1713 that England saw successful efforts to smelt iron with coal, after attempts extending over a century had failed. The first iron smelting furnace was the foundation of England's supremacy in manufacturing, for she draws from her coal mines the power to operate the incalculably rich industries upon which her commercial and maritime strength are built.

The marvellous strides made by England after the coal mines began to be freely worked for iron smelting and the processes of iron manufacturing inspire most sanguine hopes that the wealth of Canada will be also enormously enlarged when, as was the case in England, her vast stores of iron ore are converted into merchandise by the medium of her deposits of coal. By the very nature of things, a country wholly agricultural cannot have large aggregations of people, nor can it become as attractive for settlement, or as wealthy as one where great manufactures are carried on, which require and develop capital, and require and develop every variety of human labour and talent. Agriculture is a splendid auxiliary service, but alone it is not equal to the task of building up a great nation.

To her expanding wheat fields Canada looks with just pride and hope, but, with greater reason for sanguine anticipations she may view her thousands of acres of coal fields, and of other minerals which have in them "the promise and the potency" of national development that will be a marked feature of the coming century. Last year the mineral output of Canada was valued at \$48,438,247, over 21 per cent. of which was coal. Our nation's chief coal deposits are unique in location, being placed on the extreme western and eastern shores, respectively, of the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. No others in the world are

so advantageously situated for shipments. The others are in the centre of Canada, in close proximity to illimitable deposits of silver, gold, copper and lead. Nova Scotia, being the oldest in point of working, we will give its figures precedence; the Sydney coal mines have been operated since 1766. It was not, however, until 1827 that systematic mining was begun, though in 1766, four Halifax merchants were authorized to dig 3,000 chaldrons of coal, for which privilege they paid £400, and undertook to send half the output to Halifax, at the rate of one bushel and a half for a shilling. In 1784, the Governor fixed the price of coal at 11 shillings and 6 pence per ton. The following shows the output of Nova Scotia coal for a series of years, from 1827 to 1899.

Year.	Tons.	Year.	Tons.
1827.....	11,491	1872.....	785,914
1832.....	46,580	1873.....	811,760
1837.....	109,347	1874.....	972,954
1842.....	119,478	1878.....	693,511
1847.....	183,099	1881.....	1,280,050
1852.....	174,281	1891.....	2,267,919
1857.....	267,808	1897.....	2,493,454
1862.....	393,631	1898.....	2,563,886
1867.....	471,185	1899.....	3,148,822

The effect of the national tariff enacted in 1879 is strikingly exhibited in above returns. The area of the Nova Scotia coal fields is 635 square miles, and the seams run from 25 to 60 feet, or from three to five times what is considered a thick seam in Great Britain. These mines are so near the water and the Sydney piers so commodious that vessels carrying over 2,000 tons have taken on their cargo and sailed away within six hours of the time of arrival. They are 1,000 miles nearer Europe than the American coal fields, the products of which have a long haul by railway before reaching the sea. In the future then when coal will have to be sent across to Europe, the as iron ore is near at hand, the prospects are very bright for an enormous development of the mineral resources and manufacturing opportunities of Nova Scotia. The British Columbia coal mines have been Nova Scotia mines will have a great advantage, and, worked for over 60 years. The Nanaimo basin covers 200 square miles; the Comox, 600 to 700 square miles, Queen Charlotte Island, about the same, and there are other coal bearing areas which raise the total extent of the western coal fields to 13,700 square miles. The British Columbia output in past three years, and, in preceding years, was as below:—

Year.	British Columbia Coal Tons.	Year.	British Columbia Coal Tons.
1899.....	1,552,958		
1898.....	1,263,448	1881.....	257,056
1897.....	1,019,390	1874.....	90,788
1891.....	1,130,277	1836 to 1852	11,200

The production of coal in Manitoba and the Territories last year was only 334,200, the mines being in an early stage of development. In the North-West and the Rocky Mountains district, it is estimated that the coal area will prove to cover from 14,000 to 16,000 square miles. In the latter district,