

PROGRESS OF MINING IN 1904.

(From Annual Report of Minister of Mines.)

THE mineral output of the province for the past year shows, as to the gross value of the product, a distinct gain over the preceding year, and, as a matter of fact, is the greatest ever made by our mines, except that of 1901. This gross value for 1904 is \$18,977,359, and represents an increase over 1903 of \$1,481,405, or about 8.5 per cent.

An analysis of the returns for the whole province shows, however, that this increase has not been general or equal in the various districts, or as to the various minerals produced. The placer gold output shows an increase of \$44,880, which is mainly attributable to one district—Atlin, the other districts only about holding their own; while in those districts where the placer gold is obtained from the river bars, exposed only at lowest water, there is this year a marked falling off in production, since the spring opened up early and the gradual melting of the snow in the mountains prevented any extremes of high or low water, so that the bars were not exposed, and, therefore, could not be worked in the usual manner.

The districts showing an increased output this year, named in the order of precedence, were East Kootenay, the Boundary, the Coast, and the Slocan, while the greatest decrease was in the Rossland camp, this last being accounted for by changes in the management of some of the producing companies, and by experiments being conducted as to the best methods of treatment of the low-grade ores of the camp, these temporarily retarding the output.

The tonnage of ore actually being mined in the province has perhaps a more direct bearing upon the general business prosperity of the local community than have the values produced, inasmuch as it represents the amount of work actually taking place, and in this respect the year 1904 shows a very greatly increased output of ore, amounting to 1,461,609 tons, an increase over the preceding year of 175,433 tons, or nearly 14 per cent.

To say that this increase was made chiefly by the Boundary, East Kootenay and Slocan districts, scarcely does these districts full justice, for not only have they made the increase shown, but they have also offset decreases in certain other districts.

In discussing the increase in tonnage of ore mined it must be remembered that the tonnage mined in 1903, than which that of 1904 is greater by 14 per cent, was itself greater than that of the preceding year (1902) by about 29 per cent, so that, looking back two years, it is found that the tonnage output increased in these two years about 46 per cent.

The number of mines shipping in 1904 was 142, as against 125 in 1903, an increase of 17, of which 15 were in the silver-lead district. These, however, shipped less than 100 tons each during the year. Of these 142 mines shipping, there were only 76 that shipped 100 tons during the year 1904, as against 74 in 1903,

indicating that there has been no material addition to the larger shippers, such increase as has been made in the number of shipping mines being confined to the smaller high-grade properties, and being in reality largely due to the introduction of the "tribute system" of mining. The total number of men employed during the year in these shipping mines was almost exactly the same as in 1903, viz.: 3,306 as compared with 3,303.

The following table shows the number of metaliferous mines which shipped ore during the past year, together with the location of these mines and the number of men employed both above and below ground:—

TABLE SHOWING DISTRIBUTION OF SHIPPING MINES IN 1904.

	Tons of Ore Shipped.	No. of Mines Shipping.	No. of Mines Shipping over 100 tons in 1904.		Men Employed in These Mines.		Total.
			Below.	Above.	Below.	Above.	
<i>Cassiar:</i>							
Skeena	303	2	1	7	9		16
<i>East Kootenay:</i>							
Fort Steele	76,895	2	2	199	75		274
Windermere	395	5	1	19	9		28
<i>West Kootenay:</i>							
Ainsworth	14,569	12	4	70	20		90
Nelson	74,442	17	12	150	115		265
Slocan	70,296	48	18	425	192		617
Trail	312,991	13	11	573	211		784
Other divisions	26,494	10	6	99	130		229
<i>Lillooet</i>							
Yale:	40	1	..	3	1		4
Boundary	801,925	20	14	439	276		715
Ashcroft-Kamloops	1,906	2	1	40	20		60
Coast	81,383	10	6	119	105		224
Total	1,461,609	142	76	2,143	1,163		3,306

In explanation of the table, it should be said that in its preparation, a mine employing 12 men for four months is credited in the table with four men for 12 months, so that the total given is less than the actual number of individuals who worked in mines during the year.

The "labour employed to the ton of ore mined" forms some criterion of the total cost of mining in a camp, since the cost of labour is in a more or less constant proportion to such total cost. In this respect it is interesting to note in the various districts the number of tons of ore mined to each man employed. An analysis of the above table shows, approximately, that, taking the province as a whole, there were 443 tons of ore mined for each man employed about the mines. In this respect, however, the districts vary very materially, since in the Slocan district the figures show 114 tons mined to the man in the year, in the Nelson district 280 tons, in the Trail creek (Rossland) district 400 tons, and in the Boundary 1,121 tons.

Such generalisation, of course, does not apply exactly to any one mine, but only to the district, and in the first two districts mentioned the mines vary in character so greatly, some having high-grade shipping