

# Canada's Mineral Industry And Its Value to the Nation

Hon. W. A. Gordon, "the Minister from the North," Reviews the Importance of Mining in the Life of Canada. Future of Mining Industry in Canada will Exceed the Remarkable Development of the Past, Says Hon. Mr. Gordon in Radio Broadcast Last Week.

Hon. W. A. Gordon, "the Minister from the North," Minister of Immigration and Colonization and Minister of Mines, in the Dominion Government, on Thursday evening last gave a notable review of the value of Canadian mining in the past with suggestions of the still greater probabilities in the future, in a broadcast from C.N.R.O., Ottawa, under the auspices of the Professional Institute. The radio announcer in introducing Hon. Mr. Gordon said he was Minister of Mines and Minister of Immigration and Colonization; that Hon. Mr. Gordon had lived for over 25 years in Halleybury, "the centre of the mining industry in Northern Ontario," (that descriptive phrase sounding very much like a radio announcer to Timmins, Kirkland Lake, Sudbury and some other centres); that Hon. Mr. Gordon's legal practice in the mining areas and his actual participation in the industry as director of mining companies have given him a thorough knowledge of the problems incidental to the development of the industry.

Hon. Mr. Gordon's address was in part as follows:—

"To many of my listeners who live in the urban or the fertile agricultural sections of this country, a mine is that mysterious something, shares of which, when purchased two years ago for ten cents, were to sell next day for fifty—sometimes they did—but more than likely they did not.

"But those speculative issues that were bought and sold so freely do not represent the mines that make up the great mining industry of this Dominion an industry second only to agriculture in national importance,—an industry which has not merely refused

to recognize the bogey of industrial depression, but has during the year just past when most other industries were curtailing activity, undertaken more and larger expansion than was ever attempted in any previous year.

"For man must have metals and minerals for his welfare and comfort. Deprive him of them and he must shortly return to a savage state. I sometimes think that we have become so accustomed to them in our daily life that we are apt to forget their origin and so fail to appreciate the importance of the mineral industry in our civilization.

"Canada's contribution to world mineral production is yearly increasing. We have virtually secured control of the nickel market, supplying as we do 90 per cent. of the world's requirements. Owing largely to increased production from British Columbia and Quebec, and from the Kirkland Lake camp of Ontario, Canada will probably rank second among the gold producers of the world, the estimated production for 1930 being forty-three million dollars. Furthermore Canada contributes very substantially to the world's requirements of copper, lead and zinc, as well as of the non-metals such as asbestos and gypsum.

"Yet, important as our minerals are to world industry, what I should like to impress upon you tonight is their immense importance to the industrial and economic life of this country.

"Here is an industry in which, at the end of 1929, the latest year for which industrial statistics are available, there was invested some \$850,000,000 in lands, plants, buildings and working capital. More than 95,000 men were employed in operating the mines, smelters, oil and gas wells, brick plants and quarries, their payroll for the year amounting to \$125,000,000.

"Imagine a city of almost 100,000 men with their families who must be housed, clothed and fed. Think of the enormous market such a city would provide for the manufacturers of clothing, furniture and other commodities, as well as for the farmers and producers who supply them with food. Then, for breaking his ores the miner must have machinery and explosives, as well as fuels and chemicals for treating and refining them and the providing of these and the fabrication of the metals into finished articles in their turn afford employment for many thousands. It is of course, impossible to obtain exact figures of the number of men so employed, but a comparison of value of the products of manufacturing industries classified according to origin will give some idea of the dependence of manufacturing upon the mineral industry. In 1928 these figures roughly were as follows:—Farm origin

—11 billion; mineral origin—11 billion; forest origin—1 billion.

"In 1929, of the total tonnage of revenue freight carried by the railways irrespective of the distance borne, 37% was mine products and 12% was manufactures based on mine products making at total of close to 50%. This does not take into consideration the high tonnage of supplies shipped to the mining areas, dependent to a very large extent on the mineral industry.

"The value of mineral products for 1929 was over 315 millions. The dividends paid by mining companies that year were over \$50,000,000, or about 17% of the total value of production. This compares most favourably with dividends paid by our large transportation companies.

"The outlook for the future of the mining industry based on the progress and expansion of the past 18 months is most bright. Undoubtedly the Sudbury district of Ontario has witnessed more activity during the past year and a half than has any other Canadian mining centre. It has seen the Canadian practice to export the products of the copper smelters to foreign countries for refining, but the erection of a refinery at Copper Cliff, Ontario, in 1930, having a capacity of some 240,000,000 pounds of refined copper a year, Canadian workmen and Canadian business stand to benefit materially. A smelter with a capacity of 5,000 tons of ore a day was erected and put into operation at Copper Cliff. In this construction of plants of this nature there is always a considerable amount of auxiliary construction carried out: For instance, it was necessary to erect a power line from Abitibi Canyon to Copper Cliff, and to erect many residences in and about Sudbury to house workmen and officials. You can readily understand the importance of such activity, coming as it did during a period of general industrial depression.

"At Montreal East the Noranda Mines Limited in association with the Nichols Copper Company and the British Metals Corporation, are erecting a copper refinery to have a capacity of some 150,000,000 lbs. of refined copper a year.

"Although most of the progress made by the mining and related industries within the last decade is due to the enterprise and initiative of the prospectors, the mining engineer, the metallurgist, the capitalist and the investor, the assistance and encouragement given by the various Provincial Governments and by the Federal Government have served as a stimulus to the industry especially in the earlier stages of development of properties.

"In the Federal Government, the Department of Mines is responsible for the aid and encouragement offered to the mining industry. The two main branches of the Department are the Geological Survey and the Mines Branch. During the ninety odd years that the Geological Survey has been in existence its officers have been making detailed studies of the rocks, minerals and ore deposits of Canada, and it has built up a world wide reputation as an organization of the highest scientific standard. The reports and maps, especially those of new mining areas, compiled by Dominion geologists are eagerly welcomed by prospectors and mining men. The work of its officers does not end with the performances of the field tasks assigned to them. They are always ready to advise operators, engineers and others interested in mining on problems relating to the development of ore deposits.

"In concluding this talk I should like to make certain observations relative to the industry.

"First—That despite almost record low price of their products, the metal mines set a new record of quantity production in a period of general industrial depression.

"Second—That this increased production was the result of normal development and not in the nature of forced expansion.

"Third—That despite increased capital invested in expansions most of the mining companies were able to show a reasonable profit. Because of this creditable performance, the Canadian mining industry has served as the principal stabilizing influence on the business structure of the country.

"And last—That with the outstanding developments just discussed in full operation and with vast areas still to be prospected, there need be little doubt as to the future of the Canadian mineral industry. Great and prosperous it has been in the past—it will in the future literally have "to pull down its barns and build greater."

## DOMINION TO TAKE OVER OLD AGE PENSIONS WORK

The New Liskeard Speaker last week says:—"In commenting on the rumour that the Dominion Government would probably supply all the money required for pensioners after 1930, we expressed doubts as to the method which would be adopted to keep off the pension list some whose names ought not to be there. However, it has been announced that the Dominion will still require a five per cent. contribution from the Provinces, and it is quite probable that this means that the machinery now in effect will continue. We cannot think of a better system. It would cost a large sum of money if the Dominion Government had to pay officials all over the country, and then the work could not be so well done as it is now being done. It is not likely that the municipalities will again be called upon for money for the pension fund. However, we do not yet know."

Perth Examiner:—"An American paper says it is not known whether the miniature sport craze has caught on in England as much as in America, but, if it has, the Britishers will no doubt be playing cricket on the hearth this winter.

## Invention Will Benefit The Newsprint Industry

It is interesting to note how other industries are so often favourably affected by the mining industry and its affiliated industries. In his recent broadcast over the radio, Hon. W. A. Gordon touched on the benefit of the mining industry to the transportation organizations and the traffic, direct and indirect created by the mineral industries for the railways. Another case in point in regard to the benefits of the mineral industries to other lines is the invention by Mr. Horace Freeman, of Shawinigan Falls, Que., which said invention promises to make very substantial savings for the newsprint industry without unfavourably affecting any other line of Canadian labour or industry. It is hoped and expected that by making use of a new process for burning Canadian pyrite ore the newsprint industry can advantageously discontinue annual purchases of more than four and a half million dollars' worth of sulphur from foreign lands. In addition to the direct savings to the newsprint industry and the chemical industry amounting to about \$1,600,000.00 as a year, the by-product of this process, iron ore, would supply about one-eighth of the total annual iron ore requirements of Ontario and Quebec. Pyrite was the common source of sulphur before the discovery of the great brimstone deposits in the southwestern part of the United States. Under the methods in use before Mr. Freeman perfected his new burner the cost of using the Canadian pyrite as a sulphur source was so high that Canadian pyrite could not be utilized. Now, however, Mr. Freeman's invention puts an altogether different complexion on the matter. Pyrite is a mineral made up largely of iron and sulphur. In the past the sulphur content has discouraged those who wished to secure iron from this source. Under the former costly and complicated process the percentage of sulphur recovered was not sufficient to leave a good grade of iron ore. Mr. Freeman's invention of a special type of burner, however, alters the situation. The recovery of both sulphur and iron ore is much simplified and cheapened. Despite the fact that the revenue of the railways would be increased over a half a million dollars a year for the hauling of the pyrite and sulphur, there would be a saving to the paper mills of \$1,650,000.00 per year in the cost of sulphur. The Freeman plan has been unper ton for sulphur reported. Other Lawrence river, with savings of \$6.00 per ton for sulphur reported. Other mills are testing out the plan and it would appear as if the process might become general.

Mail Empire:—"We are bound to say that the press photographers of Toronto take better pictures than most of the people whom they are called upon to photograph.

## Official Laxity Blamed for Cochrane Hotel Fire

Just as the official inquest into the tragedy at the Hollinger in 1928 when 39 lost their lives was held over one particular death, so last week at Cochrane the inquest into the death of Baptiste Zardo, of Kirkland Lake, one of the victims of the Queen's hotel fire at Cochrane on Dec. 29th, was made representative of the other nine deaths believed to have occurred in the fire. At this point it may be noted that people in general in Cochrane appear to believe that a great many more lives were lost than the ten officially admitted. The public opinion in Cochrane seems to be that the death toll will be two or three times the official figures, this idea, however, being based apparently more on opinions rather than on known facts.

At the inquest last week Coroner E. R. Tucker presided and evidence was heard from twenty-four witnesses. Chief among the witnesses was Fire Chief Caswell, who is also building inspector. After hearing considerable evidence the jury decided it had enough before it to warrant making a verdict, and the jurymen declined to adjourn to the next day. Instead, they submitted the following verdict to the coroner:—

"We, the jury, find that Baptiste Zardo came to his death by burning on the 29th day of December, 1930, when the Queen's hotel was totally destroyed by fire from unknown causes.

"From the evidence we find that the Ontario fire marshal issued an order to have certain requirements completed the 2nd of November, 1930, which order was not carried out.

"On October 22 the Ontario fire marshal granted an extension of time until the 15th of January, 1931, which, under the circumstances, should not have been granted.

"We also find that the municipal authorities appear to have been negligent in their method of issuing building permits to the Queen's hotel, the plan of which was not suitable for a building of such dimensions for hotel purposes.

"We strongly recommend that the municipal authorities pay strict attention to the enforcement of the building by-laws, especially when there is danger to life."

Later in the week the Ontario fire marshal characterized this verdict as "foolish." He said that the owner of the Queen's hotel had ordered a fire escape as required by the department but that this one was found unsuitable by the department and a new one had to be ordered. When the department confirmed the fact that the new escape had actually been ordered the extension of time was naturally granted to allow time for its delivery. It would appear, however, that "the man on street" in Cochrane is inclined to support the verdict brought in by the coroner's jury, and to believe that had the

established rules and regulations in regard to fire prevention been observed, the tragedy might not have occurred.

Detroit News:—"We expect to walk into a place any day for a pound of liver, and have the butcher wrap it in a couple of stock certificates."

Natal (South Africa) Advertiser:—"In 'England, the Unknown Isle,' Herr Paul Cohen-Portheim, a German, states that the future of Great Britain "is of the greatest consequence to the whole of humanity." Unlike many of our nationalist irreconcilables, he holds that while the co-operation and help of the countries of the Empire are needed by Britain, her prosperity is essential to the very existence of the other component parts of that commonwealth; further, that the British Empire is the champion of the world supremacy of the White Man and that the end of this Empire will also be the end of the rule of the White Man.

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