

The gold content of the ore mined has remained fairly constant since 1907 at 0.44 ounces per ton. The more important mines, including the Le Roi Centre Star group, are directly owned or controlled by the Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company. The boundary district is characterized by the occurrence in enormous masses of low grade copper-sulphide ore with small values of gold. The output of lode gold in the Cassiar district is mainly obtained from the Surf Inlet mine; and the Premier mine in the Salmon River section, which recently joined the list of shippers, was in 1922 the most important producer in British Columbia.

World's Production.—A sketch of the development of the gold mining industry since the discovery of America may take the form of a reference to four successive periods. During the first period, extending from 1493 to 1760, the annual production averaged nearly .34 million fine ounces. The placer mining of Brazil and Colombia swelled the average output of the last sixty years of the period to about .66 million ounces per year.

The production of Russia from placer mining was a considerable factor in the records of the next period, extending from 1761 to 1840, the country retaining first rank among the world's producers until 1837. The annual average production during the period was 5.66 million ounces.

The third period extending from 1841 to 1890 was characterized by the remarkable discovery of gold in California and Australia in 1848 and 1851 respectively. The annual average during the fifty years was 4.94 million ounces. For the first decade the average was 1.7 million ounces and for the second 6.4 million, while the last decade shaded off to 5.1 million. The production of the period was contributed chiefly by the United States, Australia and Russia.

In the fourth period, extending from 1891 to the present time, the outstanding features were the entry of South Africa, an important and then the leading producer, and the phenomenal increase in the output of most of the gold producing countries through the introduction of the cyanide process. The output was 6.3 million fine ounces in 1891, and a steady increase was recorded until 1915, when a maximum of 22.7 million ounces were produced. The activity in many of the large gold-fields having declined after 1915, a decreasing output was recorded for each year between 1915 and 1921, the production of the latter year being nearly 16 million ounces. The Anglo-Boer war caused the only serious recession in the output of South Africa between 1888 and 1916, when the record yield of nearly 9.3 million fine ounces was obtained, this representing 42.3 p.c. of the world's total production of gold in that year. The output in 1921 was slightly in excess of 9 million ounces, forming 56.6 p.c. of the world's production.

The yield of gold in the United States is derived from placer mining, gold quartz mining and milling, and recoveries at copper and other base metal refineries. The maximum output was attained in 1915, when 4.89 million ounces were produced, the output in 1921 dropping to 2.42 million ounces, owing chiefly to the fact that the price of gold in the country remained fixed throughout the period while higher operating costs obtained.

Canada occupied in 1921, the third place among the world's gold producers, the output being 926,329 fine ounces or 5.8 p.c. of the total production of the year. The same relative position was retained in 1922, and the percentage, according to preliminary estimates, increased to 8.2, the Canadian production being 1,263,364 fine ounces as compared with the world estimate of 15,364,650 fine ounces.

For detailed statistics of the gold production of the world for 1920 and 1921, see Table 16 of this section.