

VI.—MINES AND MINERALS.¹

The appended description of the mines and minerals industry in Canada is divided into five parts:—(1) a summary of general production, (2) industrial organization of the mining industry, (3) metallic minerals, (4) non-metallic minerals and (5) clay products and structural materials.

1.—General Production.

Notwithstanding the rapid development of mineral production in Canada during recent years—the value of the annual output has increased from \$10,221,000 in 1886 to \$244,520,000 in 1927—the possibilities in the future are of even greater interest. The natural difficulties of travel in the northland have hindered the progress even of reconnaissance work, and a large part of Canada is still unexplored. Nevertheless, sufficient has been done to make known the main geological features, to indicate roughly the territories that will be found to be mineral-bearing, and to predict the character of the mineral resources in the different geological provinces. In fact, Canada today offers to the prospector the largest and most promising extent of mineral-bearing territory that anywhere remains unprospected.

The opinion is often advanced that Canada is likely to become one of the leading mineral-producing countries of the world, and considerable ground for this assumption is found in the fact that the Dominion contains 16 p.c. of the world's known coal resources, has greater asbestos and nickel deposits than any other country, and ranks third in the production of gold, while the diversity of mineral endowment is indicated by the fact that the three main divisions, metallic, non-metallic and structural and clay products, include some 60 principal items, 22 of which had each, in 1926, a production valued at \$1,000,000 or over.

Figures of total production fail to convey a correct impression of the magnitude of the industry, on account of the diversity of the product and of the units involved, while the varying prices attendant upon fluctuating market conditions vitiate comparisons on the value basis. As commodity prices reached a peak in 1920 and have since fallen greatly, production computed in terms of value is not a fair basis for comparison. In spite of this, the total value of mineral production in 1927 exceeded by more than \$16,000,000 the record of 1920.

1.—General Statistics of Mineral Production.

In Table 1 will be found the total value of the minerals produced in Canada for each year since 1886, while Table 2 gives the details of the mineral production of 1925 and 1926, with the percentages of increase or decrease in the latter year. An interesting comparison of the mineral production of the two years, as to quantities and values, is furnished in Table 3, which shows that the increase of 6.1 p.c. in the value of product in the latter year, as compared with the former, occurred in spite of a decline of 7.4 p.c. in average prices. Had all prices been the same in 1926 as in 1925 the increase in value due to increased quantities would have been 13.5 p.c.

¹ See also article "Geology of Canada," pp. 16-27 of this edition of the Year Book.