

CHAPTER XIII.—MINES AND MINERALS

CONSPECTUS

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The interpretation of the symbols used in the tables throughout the Year Book will be found on p. viii of this volume.

Section 1.—Canada's Mineral Industry, 1867-1967*

Canada's mineral industry takes pride in its record of growth and expansion over the past hundred years, although its history reaches back to the activities of the earliest explorers. Samuel de Champlain, early in the 17th century, discovered silver and copper in what is now Nova Scotia and, later in that century, in 1672, Nicholas Denys noted the existence of coal on Cape Breton Island. At about the same time, Sieur de la Portardière began the first examination of bog iron deposits in Canada in the St. Maurice Valley of Quebec. In the 18th century, exploration activity increased and a number of mining operations were undertaken—coal was produced in Cape Breton and iron ore for iron-smelting operations was produced in several communities of Quebec. However, it was not until the 19th century that development of Canada's mineral resources got under way on a significant scale and by the middle of the century there had been sufficient mineral activity to give promise of a major resource industry. With the founding of the Geological Survey of Canada in 1842 began the systematic examination of the country's mineral resources and since then the Survey's records and reports have served as important guides to prospectors and exploration companies in their search for new mineral deposits.

By the time of Confederation a number of discoveries had been made in Eastern Canada but the most spectacular was the discovery of gold in British Columbia in the 1850s. Although the gold rush on the Fraser and Thompson Rivers was relatively short-lived, thousands of people flocked into British Columbia in the 1850s and the 1860s as a direct result of gold-mining activity. Settlement, railway construction, agricultural expansion and growing industrialization have followed many other mineral discoveries. Reference to even one or two notable examples of mineral discoveries in each decade of the past century illustrates the importance of the mineral industry in the economic development of Canada. In the 1860s a thriving oil industry was established in southwestern Ontario, following an initial discovery near Petrolia in the late 1850s. Asbestos was

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