

Alberta. In tonnage terms Alberta is Canada's leading coal-producing province, producing both subbituminous and bituminous coals. Subbituminous coal is primarily used for electricity generation, although its use in a newly developed direct-reduction iron-making process opens the possibility of new markets. Most bituminous coal is exported to Japan. Bituminous production reached 4.5 million short tons (4 100 000 t) while subbituminous production rose to 6.5 million short tons (5 900 000 t). These levels represented increases of 25% and 16% respectively, over 1974 outputs.

Alberta continued to expand its subbituminous industry in 1975 and 1976 to meet its demand for energy. Alberta subbituminous coal was also used to produce power in Saskatchewan. Thermal electric plants are generally located close to coal mines to facilitate low cost power generation. At Wabamun Lake, 40 miles (64 km) west of Edmonton, Calgary Power Ltd. operates two power plants on coal from two mines. Other coal-fired power plants include the Drumheller, Battle River and Grande Cache stations. While coal will continue to play an important role in Alberta's electric utility planning for some time, the decision in 1976 not to approve the Dodds-Round Hill development, 40 miles (64 km) southeast of Edmonton, demonstrated the government's concern with projects that produce conflicting demands on certain agricultural land.

Alberta's new coal policy released in 1976 stressed increased royalties, more comprehensive regulations and a new land classification system. Royalties were increased from 10 cents a ton (11 cents a tonne) to a sliding percentage scale based on profits and capital investments. Environmental, social, economic and reclamation studies will now be required prior to any new development, and all proposed developments must go through several evaluations by different government agencies and departments. The policy divides Alberta into four zones varying from one in which no exploration or development will be permitted to one in which the restrictions are less severe.

In mid-1976, the Alberta cabinet gave its conditional approval to two coal developments. The Luscar Sterco Ltd. project 100 miles (161 km) west of Edmonton and Gregg River Resources Ltd. 10 miles (16 km) south of Hinton were allowed to proceed on condition that they conform with the regulations contained in the new coal policy. The Luscar Sterco Ltd. project is to supply thermal coal to Ontario Hydro for a period of 15 years.

Four mines produce coking coal in Alberta. In 1975 the largest operator, McIntyre Mines Limited near Grande Cache, produced about 1.9 million short tons (1 700 000 t) of mainly coking coal for markets in Japan, the US and Canada. In 1975 McIntyre shipped 350,000 short tons (318 000 t) of coal to Ontario and Nova Scotia steel producers and was continuing test shipments in 1976.

After a five month miners' strike curtailed production to 800,000 short tons (726 000 t) in 1974, Cardinal River Coals Ltd. produced approximately 1.5 million short tons (1 400 000 t) in 1975. Cardinal River diversified its markets in 1975 by making a shipment to Ontario in addition to its Japanese shipments.

The Canmore Mines Ltd. produced 185,000 short tons (168 000 t) of semi-anthracite coal in 1975. Coleman Collieries Limited produced 850,000 short tons (771 000 t) of coal in 1975 from underground and open-pit mines. The underground operations are being phased out, and in the future production will come from the Tent Mountain open-pit site. Deliveries to Japan are scheduled to reach 900,000 short tons (816 000 t) by 1977.

Saskatchewan. In 1975, four lignite mines in the Estevan-Bienfait region of southern Saskatchewan produced about 3.9 million short tons (3 500 000 t) of lignite. The Manitoba and Saskatchewan Coal Company (Limited) and Utility Coals Limited produced nearly 2.8 million short tons (2 500 000 t) for the Saskatchewan Power Corporation Boundary Dam power station. Other production in Saskatchewan came from the Bienfait M & S Mine and Manalta's Klimax Mine, both of which served power generation and industrial markets.