GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF CANADA
G. M. DAWSON, C.M.G., LL.D., F.R.S., DIRECTOR.

SECTION OF

MINERAL STATISTICS AND MINES

SUMMARY

OF THE

MINERAL PRODUCTION OF CANADA

FROM

1886 to 1896

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To Dr. G. M. Dawson, C.M.G., F.R.S., Etc.,
Director of the Geological Survey.

Sir,—I have the honour herewith to submit a tabulated statement of the Mineral Production of Canada for the past eleven years. A similar statement has been previously issued for each of the years dealt with, first in pamphlet form, and subsequently, after revision, as part of the Annual Report of this section. These latter, having been revised according to the latest information available and brought to a uniform basis of presentment are now compiled to form a comparative statement illustrating the progress of the mineral industries of Canada from 1886 to 1896 inclusive.

I am, sir,

Your obedient servant,

ELFRIC DREW INGALL,
In charge of Section.

Geological Survey of Canada,
(Section of Mineral Statistics and Mines),
26th June, 1897.

INTRODUCTION.

In examining the attached table of the Mineral Production of Canada for the past eleven years, the following important features relating to Canada's mineral development will be noticed.

In 1886 the total mineral production of the country as per direct returns, supplemented by close estimates where complete returns could not be obtained, was valued at a little over ten million dollars. In 1896 the value of Canada's mineral production had increased 125 per cent or to over twenty-two and a half million dollars. Taking the data given for the United States in the volume of, the "Mineral Industry," issued by the Engineering and Mining Journal of New York, we find that in a similar period the increase has been only in the neighbourhood of 40 per cent. The mineral production of the United States, however, is of course vastly greater than that of Canada, the latter amounting in 1896 to but 3½ per cent of the former. The relative per capita production of minerals for the two countries is as follows, viz., for Canada about $4.50 and for the United States about $8. The rapid growth noted above is, however, a most encouraging feature and the present outlook for mineral discovery and development in Canada would seem to promise a rapid rate of increase for many years to come. The main part of this increase must of course be in those minerals which permit of being exported and sold in foreign markets, as the home market must necessarily be limited and grow slowly in a country with so small a population, and where even that small number of people are scattered over so large an extent of territory. This necessarily influences in an important way the question of distribution, enhancing considerably the cost of carriage from producer to consumer, and even rendering many of our deposits of the lower priced minerals unworkable at a profit at present. Great improvements have been made in this respect of late years and others are contemplated in the near future which will bring some of our most promising mineral districts within economically reachable distance of extensive markets and help considerably towards the expected general growth of the industry.

It is interesting to note the proportions contributed by the various minerals towards the grand total, and their arrangement according to their importance as in the following table brings out some interesting points.

MINERAL PRODUCTION OF CANADA, 1896.

Proportionate Value of different Mineral Products.

Product.	Contributing over 10 p.c.	Contributing between 5 and 10 p.c.	Contributing between 1 and 5 p.c.	Contributing under 1 p.c.	Total.
Coal	31·94				
Gold	12·30				
Silver		9·50			
Bricks (estimated)		7·10			
Nickel		5·25			
Petroleum		5·11			
Copper			4·52		
Building stone (estimated)			4·43		
Lead			3·20		
Lime (estimated)			2·88		
Asbestus			1·90		
Salt			1·59		
Natural gas			1·22		
Gypsum				0·76	
Iron				0·65	
Sundry under 1 p.c.				7·74	
Totals	44·24	26·96	19·65	9·15	100·00

From the above it will be seen that, in the year under consideration, coal is to be credited with almost a third while gold comes second at about 12 per cent. In the five to ten per cent class come silver, bricks, nickel and petroleum ; whilst in the one to five per cent class we find copper, building stone, lead, lime, asbestus, salt and natural gas in the order named. Gypsum and iron contribute less than one per cent. Over 90 per cent of the total is thus accounted for under the above fifteen headings out of a total number of fifty-four minerals mentioned.

Taking the different classes of minerals we find that the metallic group contributed 35·63 per cent ; the miscellaneous non-metallic 44·12 per cent ; the structural materials 19·14 per cent with an allowance of 1·11 per cent for estimated value of mineral products unreturned.

In studying a comparative statement such as the tabulation given, it must be remembered that the above percentages are of the gross values which vary from year to year, not only by reason of varying amounts produced, but also on account of the fluctuations in the price. This latter factor has affected some minerals more than others. The heavy drop in the price of silver, for instance, in the past few years, has very greatly affected its place in the scale, and copper, nickel and asbestus have also suffered heavily in this respect, as can be seen by comparison of 1896 with earlier years in the main table. In order to facilitate this use of the table the features of increase and decrease have been brought out by the use of differing type as explained in the foot notes.