

# MINES & MINING



## Coal Mining On Vancouver Island



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### New Vancouver Coal Co.

The oldest established and most important industry of Vancouver Island is coal mining. Coal was first discovered on the Island at Fort Rupert, in 1835, and mining was carried on intermittently by the Hudson's Bay Company for several years, and finally abandoned at that point, the coal measures being considered not wide enough. Mining was resumed at Nanaimo in 1851, and has been continued ever since. The Hudson's Bay Company disposed of their coal lands at Nanaimo to the New Vancouver Coal Company in 1862, and that company is operating the mines successfully, the deposits showing no signs of exhaustion, and the output increasing from year to year. The New Vancouver Coal Company is operating over a large area on Vancouver and the adjacent islands. There are six shafts on the property, viz., Nos. 1 and 2, in the city of Nanaimo; the Northfield, the Southfield, the Harewood and the Southfield No. 2, all within a radius of six miles from the city, and connected with the company's shipping docks by a railway. There are also the Protection Island and Newcastle Island mines, which have separate shipping facilities. About 1,500 men are employed in these mines, which are the chief support of Nanaimo, a city of over 8,000 inhabitants.



HARRISON LAKE—NEW WESTMINSTER M. D.

## The Dunsmuir Mines

The growing importance of the coal industry at Nanaimo incited others to search for coal, among them the late Hon. Robert Dunsmuir, who discovered extensive deposits at Comox and Wellington. The Wellington mines were discovered in 1869 and were worked successfully for many years, being finally abandoned in 1900 for the more promising measures at South Wellington and Extension. The Extension mine was only opened in 1898, but development has been so rapid that already the output aggregates 2,000 tons per day, and this, through the admirable plan of working, may be easily doubled at any time. Diamond drill borings demonstrate the fact that there is coal enough to supply 2,000 tons a day for 100 years. At present three inclines are being sunk at different points, all converging to a main tunnel, which now pierces the earth for over a mile, and which will eventually be the main highway of the mine. The Extension mines are eight miles from the new town of Ladysmith, a splendid harbor on Oyster Bay, where the Wellington Colliery Company (which owns and operates these mines, as well as those at Alexandria and Comox) has bunkers and wharves that will accommodate and load five of the largest steamships at one time. The Alexandria mine, which is also close to Ladysmith, is producing about 800 tons a day and is being systematically developed.

## Comox Mines

The Comox mines are situated eleven miles northwest of Union Bay, on the east coast of Vancouver Island, with which they are connected by a narrow-gauge railway. They cover some 300 square miles and are noted for the superior quality of the coal, which is the best for steam purposes in the world, excepting only the Welsh. These mines are now supplying the British and United States Pacific squadrons. They have been worked since 1887. Six shafts are being worked, connected by slopes and levels, and about 1,600 tons a day are produced. These mines are said to be practically inexhaustible, the present workings and explorations with the diamond drill demonstrating the presence of immense quantities of coal.

## Other Prospects

All these mines are situated on the east coast of Vancouver Island, and occur in two distinct coal measures—the Douglas, on which are located all the mines of the New Vancouver Coal Company, and the Alexandria, of the Wellington Colliery Company; and the Wellington, on which all the other mines of the Wellington Colliery Company are situated. These great coal measures are, strange to say, only separated by about 350 feet of shales, sandstones and conglomerates. So far they are the only coal fields that have been developed, although numerous and strong indications of coal exist at several points on the north and west coasts. The most important of these is being developed on Quatsino Sound, which gives promise of future success. Outcroppings of coal-bearing rock are found on the southwest coast, at Hesquoit Harbor and at Carmanah Point, but as yet nothing has been done to prove the value of these indications.

The capital actually invested by the two operating companies is, in round figures, \$3,000,000, and their combined monthly payrolls amount to about \$230,000, or \$2,760,000 annually.

