

**ORPHANED/ABANDONED MINES WORKSHOP:
World War II - Mineral Properties & Inventory
Issues**

By

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June 26, 2001

Introduction

- **Thank you for providing me with an opportunity to comment on some of the actions taken, by the federal government and industry, during the second World War, that may have some implications for a discussion on orphan/abandoned mines in Canada.**
- **Three issues will be discussed:**
 - **(1) Historical Context, a time of a national emergency.**
 - **(2) War Measures Act,**
 - **Critical metals (development of marginal & sub marginal properties,**
 - **Effects on Gold Industry.**
 - **(3) Challenges for documenting orphan/abandoned mines from WWII era.**

(1) WWII – Historical Context

Department of Munitions & Supply

- **The Department of Munitions & Supply, was proclaimed on April 9, 1940 and superceded the War Supply Board, both of which were created under the authority of the War Measures Act.**
- **The value of nonferrous metal production had nearly doubled between 1939 & 1943. Commodity prices had been frozen to pre-war levels. Notwithstanding Russia, Canada contributed the following to the United Nations (Allied) total metal output,**
 - **95% of the combined nickel output;**
 - **20% of the Zinc; & 12% of the copper**
 - **15% of all lead;**
 - **75% of the asbestos, and 40% of the aluminum.**

(2) War Emergency & Metal Production

In addition to greatly expanding non-ferrous metal production Canada was also asked to find if a variety of commodities that were needed for the war effort could also be found and produced here.

- This list included: aluminum, chromium, manganese, mercury, mica, molybdenum, tin, tungsten, uranium and vanadium.
- Magnesium and peat moss were later added to the critical materials list.

Metals Controller

- On July 15, 1940 an Order in Council, was passed under the authority of the War Measures Act appointing a Metals Controller.
- George C. Bateman, who was also the President of the Canadian Institute of Mining & Metallurgy (CIM) was asked to be the Metals Controller.
- The Metals Controller was given absolute power: *“...to buy sell, mine, process, store, transport or otherwise deal with all minerals, ores, metallic products, metal and alloys thereof, except coal and other solid fuels, oil, steel and iron (de Kennedy pg. 96)*

Metals Controller Organization

The Metals Controller had three divisions.

- (1) **Administration**, which dealt with administration of the office and personnel;
- (2) **the Development Division**, which regulated existing projected metal and mineral production;
- (3) **the Allocation and Conservation Division**, which *was responsible for finding substitutes for critical metals and for allocating available supplies from private and government financed mines and from stock piles.* (de Kennedy 1950).

Metals Controller - Priorities

- **In September, 1941 a priorities section was established in Metals Control, which included:**
- **Arrangements between the governments of Canada and the United States;**
- ***The effect of the United States priorities system on the Canadian mineral industry was to control and regulate the flow of vital mining machinery and supplies originating in that country , and it was the duty of the Priorities Section of the Metals Control to assist the Priorities Branch of the Department to obtain the types that were required by the expanding mining programme in Canada (de Kennedy pg. 102).***

Metals Controller - Priorities

For priority purposes, mines were divided by the Control into two classes; those producing base metals, coal and strategic minerals, and those producing precious metals. The former, the highest possible priority ratings were awarded; while the latter were only given a rating for the purchase of maintenance, repair and operating supplies and not for any complete assemblies of new equipment of a capital nature. This was in accordance with the view of United States authorities on the relative unimportance of the production of gold as compared with the output of base metals and non-metallics for munitions and supplies. (de Kennedy pg. 102)

Establishment of a Wartime Metals Corporation

- In mid 1942, additional measures were taken to increase critical metal production. These included:
 - *(1) the formation of a Crown Company – Wartime Metals Corporation;*
 - *(2) the opening of new properties pursuant to financial arrangements made between War Supplies Limited and Metals Reserve Company of the United States under a master agreement.*
 - *(3) the formation of an Advisory Metals Committee under an order-in-council passed May 11, 1942.*

Wartime Metals Corporation - Projects

- In his seminal work, de Kennedy notes that much of the records of the Department of Munitions and Supply (DM&S) are incomplete. As there was a ban on critical metal production from 1940-1943 there is no definitive record of all DM&S projects.
- *Each branch, control and crown company was supposed to keep a complete record of its activities in narrative form for subsequent reference. But in those days the production of munitions was more important than historical records, and when I came to prepare the history in 1946 I found that, while some of the records had been well kept, others were very sketchy, some had not been prepared at all and most did not go beyond the end of 1943.*

Wartime Metals Corporation - Projects

- Tetrault Zinc Project
- Chromeraïne Project
- Emerald Tungsten Project
- Dominion Magnesium Project
- Vanadium Ash Collection
- Tyee Project
- Kootenay – Florence Project
- Kam Kotia Project
- Lake Geneva Project
- High Lake Molybdenite Project
- Zenith Molybdenite Project
- Craigmont Corundum Project
- La Corne Molybdenite Project
- Lava Talc Project
- Granby Project
- Britannia Copper Project

War Metals Advisory Committee

- **Under the terms of the May 1942 Order-in-Council, the War Metals Advisory Committee was given the authority to making recommendations leading to the increase in production of copper, zinc, lead and other strategic metals and minerals, and the development of marginal and sub-marginal properties.**
- **The members of the committee were chosen by the CIM and served without remuneration.**

War Metals Advisory Committee

- In Manitoba, a project was developed and several others were given advanced review, none of which are recorded in de Kennedy's historical account, for examples.
- Mandy Mine (Flin Flon area) was a Wartime Metals Corporation Project.
- Projects that reached an advanced state, included:
 - Bird River Chromites,
 - Riding Mountain Area manganese deposits,
 - Scheelite (Tungsten) deposits near Falcon Lake,
 - Several Molybenite Deposits (south eastern Manitoba).

Low Priority of Gold Production

- **Subject to being a low priority of the Metal Controller's Office gold producers were also faced with a workforce in short supply (Udd, 1998).**
- **Gold mines in Manitoba that closed included: Ogama Mine, Gunnar Mine and God's Lake Mine.**
- **Gold mining was not banned, but given the low Metal Controller's priority and not permitted to purchase any, new or complete assemblage of equipment in was inevitable that mines would close.**

(3) Challenges for Documenting Orphan/Abandoned Mines from WWII era.

- **Is there a complete inventory of Metal Controller projects/ operations that were either not reported or under reported that were undertaken as marginal or sub marginal projects?**
- (II) Is there an inventory of gold mines that were closed because of indirect government actions that compromised the efforts of an operator to stay in operation?**