

Congo Copper an Invaluable Help to the War Effort



A miner at work in the Katanga district

In 1900 the Congo Free State and the Katanga Company, wishing to realize some value from newly-discovered territories, founded an organization called the Comité Spécial du Katanga. Each paid in capital according to the value of his property both above and below the Katanga soil.

In 1901 the Special Committee transferred prospecting rights for the Katanga mines to an English company, Tanganyika Concessions Ltd. Five years later, on October 30, 1906, a company was formed by the Special Committee, Tanganyika Concessions Ltd., and the Société Générale de Belgique whose job was to assess the value of newly discovered mines. This company was called the Union Minière du Haut-Katanga. It was capitalized at 10 million francs. The investment has steadily increased until today it amounts to 176,400,000 francs (about six million dollars).

An agreement entered into between the Special Committee and the Union Minière du Haut-Katanga conceded the rights of exploitation to the latter company, including

among other things all copper deposits in a zone measuring about 15,000 square kilometers, located in the Haut-Katanga.

Due to the geological and topographical conditions which are often present with copper deposits, this metal lends itself particularly well to surface mining and to the use of less powerful methods of excavation such as the steam or electric shovel.

The first metallurgical operations on an industrial scale date from 1911 after the railroad was built through to the mines. In the beginning of this same year the first smelter was built and the first twelve months saw production of a thousand tons of copper. Today production is more than 150,000 tons and the known reserves are considerable.

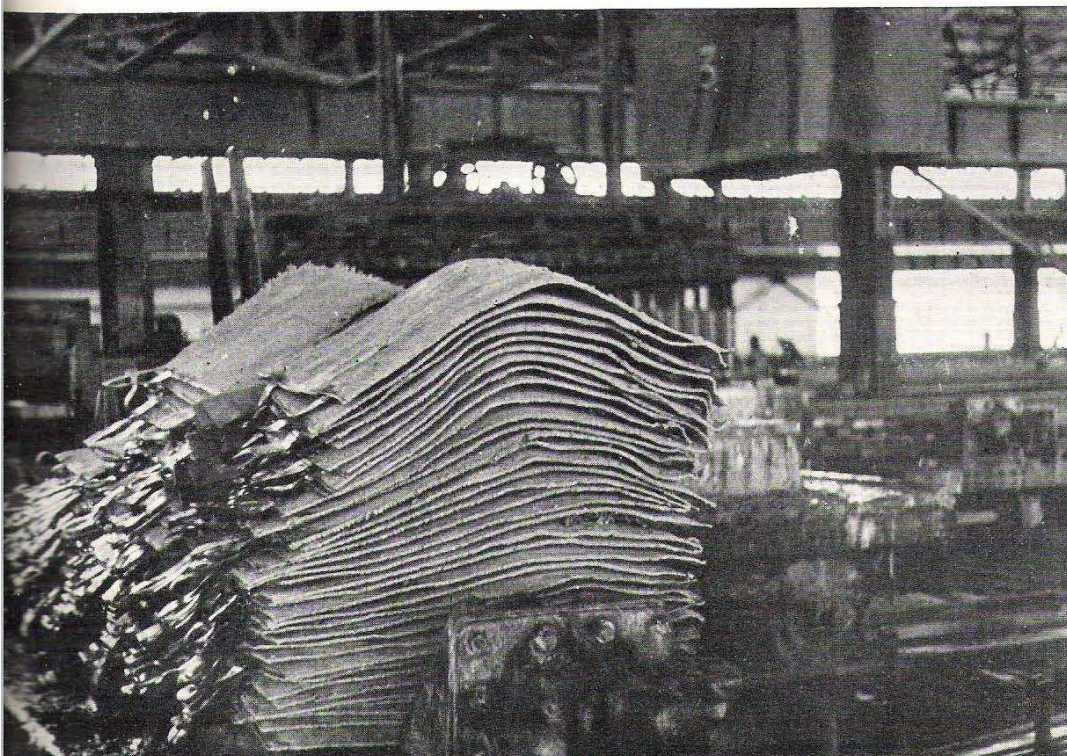
The company has built railroad junctions, roads and houses for its European (2,000 white office workers) and native (18,000 workers) personnel, clubs, restaurants, movie theaters, water and electric power works, a glass factory, etc.

The health of the European and native population is supervised by the company's Medical Service which today has a staff of 28 doctors. Hospitals and sanatoriums have been set up at each

Thanks to the Congo, Belgium ranks among the largest copper producers in the world.

Copper is the most valuable of the so-called non-precious metals and constitutes today the principal source of Belgian colonial wealth. The Congo copper production is an invaluable help to the Allied war effort.

Sheets of copper as are supplied to the United Nations.



Half-Million Ounces of Gold extracted yearly from Congo Mines

Prospecting undertaken by the Congo Free State in 1903 brought about the discovery of alluvial gold in the tributaries of the Ituri near Irumu. In 1904 the State decided to exploit the gold fields and the first machinery was set up in July 1905.

Prospecting pushed beyond the limits of the Kilo region, and in 1910, the Hannam Missions discovered in the Uélé-Nékopo a series of important veins in the tributaries of the Moto. A new rush was created under the name of "Moto" and the first "clean-up" made at the end of 1911.

Toward the end of 1919, the government put the working of these gold mines into the hands of a committee composed of colonial technicians which was to administer it under the name of "Régie Industrielle des Mines de Kilo-Moto."

The white employees in the mines number about 300 Europeans, the number of colored people employed in various capacities is about 20,000. Production is over 512,000 ounces per year, including that of privately owned mines.

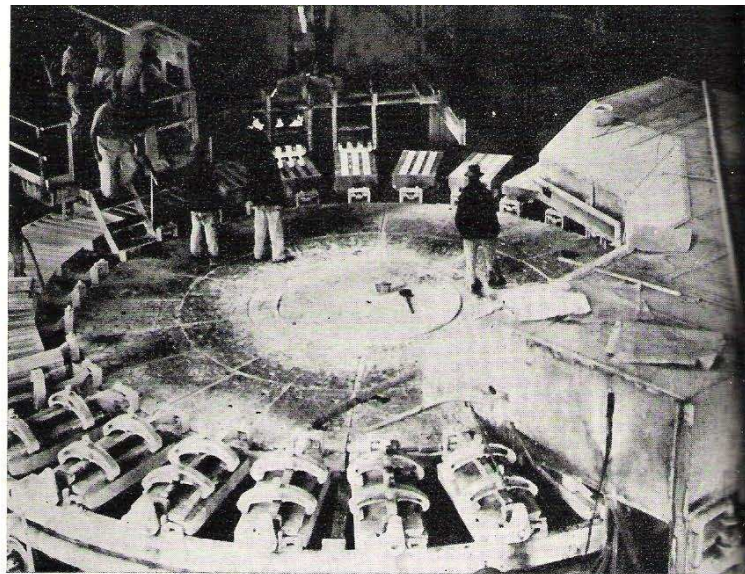
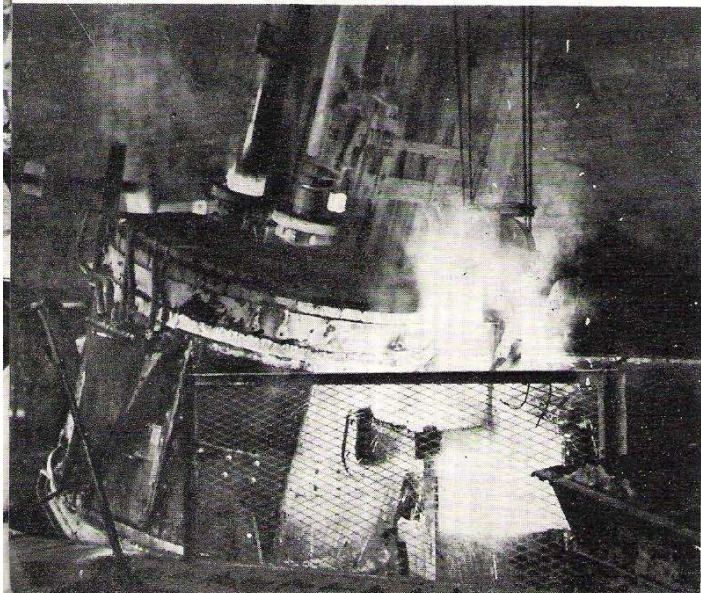
Largest World Production of Radium

Uranium, the ore from which radium is extracted, was not discovered in the Congo until 1913; but the Belgian Congo now produces 90% of the world supply.

Before the war, the ore was treated in Belgium. Its richness is such that, in 1928, over 35 grams of radium were produced from the Belgian Congo source, as against 3 grams for the rest of the world, and the price of radium was accordingly considerably reduced.

Much of the Congo radium is given away for scientific and medical purposes.

Heroult furnace at a Jadotville Panda factory.



Interior of a factory at Jadotville Shituru.

Congo Strategic Metals

The estimated tin deposits in the Congo form an immense line from the Southwest to the Northeast, from the 11th parallel south to the 1st parallel south.

Out of a yearly world production of, in round figures, 200,000 tons of tin, the Congo was responsible before the war for approximately 10,000 tons. This Belgian production is increasing rapidly and is more than ever precious to the Allies.

Cobalt is another strategic metal, the Congo production of which is 60% of the world total.

Production of Belgian Congo Diamonds exceeds Half of World Total

Diamonds are abundant in the Belgian Congo, the first diamond being found in 1907 in the Kasai province. Systematic prospecting in the following years disclosed the existence of large mines in at least seven districts, the richest being the Kasai, whence most of the Belgian Congo diamonds come today.

Most of the diamonds found in the Belgian Congo vary between one-tenth and one-twelfth of a carat, and an important part of the production is of the industrial quality, so-called "boart."

For the last few years, the Belgian Congo has been the largest producer of diamonds in the world. In 1937, that production was 5,059,927 carats valued at some 50 million dollars and represented 56.6% of the total world production.

The Belgian Congo diamonds are sold through an international syndicate operating in London, but most of the diamonds are cut in Antwerp mainly for export, the United States taking, in normal times, 85% of that exportation.

*Native pottery worker
from Yambuya.*







Landing place at the Lukolela plantation.

100,000 Tons of Palm Oil Produced Yearly in the Belgian Congo

The *Elaeis* palm tree originated in Guinea, but it also grows wild throughout Central Africa. In the Belgian Congo it covers a very wide area.

There are different ways of profiting from the *Elaeis* palm tree. The first consists of buying the fruit from the natives. This is done in certain parts of the Congo which are rich in natural palm groves. Some private interest sets up a small factory near a railroad or river, buying the fruit from the natives and exporting oil and almonds. This is an easy and cheap method.

The second method consists in working a concession comprised of a large area covered with palms. These forests of palms are usually old and the ages of the trees vary greatly.

The third method of profit is by cultivation of the *Elaeis* on a regular plantation.

The production of palm almonds is estimated as a minimum of 250 pounds per acre.

Production and the quality of oil which comes from the fleshy part of the fruit, vary according to the method of extraction.

The natives, with their primitive methods of extraction, obtain only a relatively small percentage: 10 to 12%, whereas with modern processes the oil yield is sometimes as high as 23% or 24% of the weight of the fruit. Two tons of fruit can produce 1,000 pounds of palm oil.

The native methods of extraction generally consist in pounding the fruit thus crushing the oily pulp. The matter obtained is boiled, and the impurities separated off. The nut is then broken by hand and the palm almond extracted.

Modern methods consist in passing the fruits through a depulper when hot. The "magma" is then sent through a press.

The quality of the oils, and particularly of those oils produced by native processes, is of great commercial importance.

Palm oil production in the Congo amounts to more than 110,000 tons per year.

Palm oil factory at Leopoldville.



A forest with oil palms, near Ganda.