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## THE SOUTH'S POSITION IN THE MINERAL INDUSTRY<sup>1</sup>

By Dr. R. S. POOR

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THE mineral industry has been ranked equal in financial importance to transportation, being exceeded only by agricultural pursuits. The world average for the five years preceding 1931 was \$12,000,000,000 worth of minerals annually. In 1931 the figure dropped to \$8,000,000,000.

In the United States the average annual mineral production has averaged \$5,500,000,000 up to 1931, or a little less than 50 per cent. of the world's total. In 1931 it dropped to \$3,250,000,000.

To produce \$6,000,000,000 worth of minerals in the United States (and we have produced \$6,500,000,000 worth) means that 2,000,000 workers were directly employed and 10,000,000 indirectly. If we include

refining and fabrication valued at \$15,000,000,000 we add 10,000,000 more workers. Distribution valued at \$20,000,000,000 adds 5,000,000 more, and we find at last that in so-called good times the mineral industry accounts for the livelihood of 27,000,000 workers, who handle a total of \$41,000,000,000 worth of mineral goods. In the 40 years from 1886 to 1926 the per capita mineral production in the United States increased from \$7.78 to \$53.34, or seven-fold. It dropped back to \$47 in 1929 and \$39 in 1930.

The last quarter of a century has seen most of this development. It is estimated that more fuel and more metals have been used during the last twenty-five years than during all the time that went before.<sup>2</sup>

What has been the South's contribution to this inter-

<sup>1</sup> Presidential address delivered on April 13 before the Alabama Academy of Science, twelfth annual meeting, State Teachers College, Florence, Alabama.

<sup>2</sup> Scott Turner, "The Mineral Industry," U. S. Bureau of Mines, Information Circulars Nos. 6643 and 6682.