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TUNGSTEN

Tungsten is a ductile, white metal with a melting point of 3,410° C. (6,152° F.) which is higher than any other metal. It retains much of its tensile strength and elasticity at temperatures up to 500° C. (932° F.) Tungsten steels and carbides are extensively used in machine tools, jet and rocket engines, and other applications where structural strength, extreme hardness, and resistance to wear at elevated temperatures are needed.

Tungsten occurs chiefly as scheelite (CaWO₄) and most tungsten ore bodies are contact deposits developed in lime-rich rocks by granite intrusions. Although tungsten deposits are widely distributed in the world, China has been by far the largest producer (28 percent) and has the largest reserves. The United States has been the second largest producer (13 percent), but until 1951 consumed more than it produced. Nevada and California have been the largest producing states, each having produced about 30 percent of the total for the United States. Quotations for domestic scheelite in mid 1963 were around \$8 and in December 1964 were \$17 to \$19 per short ton unit of WO₃, in contrast to a Government stockpile price of \$63 in 1951-1956. These much lower prices since 1956 have resulted in the closing of most tungsten mines in the United States except a few that produce ores containing other marketable minerals.

About 28 miles northeast of Winnemucca in the Potosi mining district, from 8 to 15 miles north of the Western Pacific Railroad, scheelite occurs around the margins of a large granodiorite body in silicated limestone that is interbedded with argillite. An estimated five hundred thousand units of WO₃ have been produced from underground workings extending to a depth of over four hundred feet. A unit of WO₃ contains 15.86 pounds of tungsten and weighs 20 pounds.

The area north of this district has a thrust plate (a large slice of rock pushed over some other rocks in mountain making) estimated to be 100 to 700 feet thick overlying the ore-bearing strata. As gold also occurs in the mines of the district, a geochemical survey of the covered area north of the Potosi mining district would seem quite worthwhile.

Tungsten

TUNGSTEN (Continued)

The Nevada-Massachusetts property, one of the two largest United States producers of tungsten, is about 27 miles southwest of Winnemucca, Nevada, 11 miles south of the Western Pacific Railroad. It has produced one million five hundred thousand units of WO₃ from open pits and from underground workings which extend to a depth of over fourteen hundred feet.

The Golconda mine, 17 miles southeast of Winnemucca, has produced one hundred five thousand units of WO₃ from tungsten-bearing iron and manganese oxides. These oxides were deposited by Pleistocene hot springs as fissure veins and as blankets cementing gravel beds.

