

A NOTE ON THE ECONOMICS OF MARBLE IN INDIA

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THE term marble is variously understood. From the scientist's standpoint only metamorphosed limestone should be included in its definition. From the commercial standpoint, however, marble is recognized as including any natural stone which is of less hardness than granite, having a sufficiently close texture to take and retain a polished face, and being produced in sufficient quantities for use for decorative purposes in the building industry.

With geological marbles the fundamental element is calcium, which in combination with carbon dioxide and oxygen forms the mineral calcite. No variety of marble is chemically pure. They all contain a greater or less amount of foreign material, sometimes chemically combined, sometimes as admixed minerals. It is the presence of these that gives to coloured marbles the veins, markings and flowerings that make the material so useful for purposes of decoration. The various shades of yellow, pink, and red found in coloured marbles are mainly due to the iron oxides, and the shades from bluish-grey to black are generally due to the presence of carbonaceous matter, the greens are caused by the intrusion of iron and copper sulphide, mica and talc. Many marbles are derived from magnesian limestones and dolomites the chief distinction being the increased hardness and higher specific gravity of the latter. The specific gravity of white marble of the best quality is 2.6 to 2.7, that of dolomite is 2.8 to 2.95.

Occurrence : The important places where marble deposits are found in India are shown in Table No. 1. Makrana in Rajasthan has the largest amount of marble deposits of many varieties in India. Besides the sites of occurrence shown in the table, there are numerous other sites in India containing marble reserves which have not been properly surveyed so far. Even the sites shown in column 5 and most of the sites shown in column 1 are more or less unexplored as quarrying operations are not carried out. Many of the sites are not connected by roads. As a result it is extremely difficult to transport the products from the quarries. At Selwara, quite close to the boundaries of the quarry-pits, lie the agricultural fields of the owner-cultivators who are unwilling to allow any motor traffic to pass through their farms. The main road (Abu Road-Mandar) is about 5½ miles away from Selwara. Similar is the case for Perwa, Serwa and Bhatana quarries which are located at a distance of 2 miles, 2½ miles and 11 miles respectively from the main road.

Varieties : Marble of main recognized varieties occurring in India are as under :—

(1) **SACCHAROIDAL :** Marbles, even in grain, presenting sugary appear-