

Here again lack of market has been the trouble, due to lack of direct railway communication, but this is now at least partly remedied, as during the past year the Kettle River Valley Railroad has been built, passing through Princeton, and giving direct communication with the Boundary District and connection, via Merritt for the present, with the Coast. This should greatly enlarge the available market, while the railway itself will consume a large amount of coal.

The Princeton coal is lignitic in character, and, while not better than other coals for steam purposes, is very popular as a domestic fuel.

EAST KOOTENAY COALFIELD.

There were only two companies producing in this field in 1915—the Crow's Nest Pass Coal Company, operating collieries at Coal Creek (Fernie) and at Michel, and the Corbin Coal and Coke Company, with its colliery at Corbin.

The Hosmer mines, owned by the C.P.R. Natural Resources, was closed in 1914 and has been at least temporarily abandoned.

The closing-down of this colliery, which in 1913 mined 217,528 tons of coal and made 59,071 tons of coke, makes a great difference to the coal-output for the district, and particularly so as the Canadian Pacific Railway, which formerly consumed most of the coal from this colliery, now obtains its fuel-supply from a colliery in Alberta.

There was mined in the district in 1915 some 840,965 tons of coal, of which approximately 397,035 tons was used in making coke—of which 230,178 tons (2,240 lb.) was produced, leaving the net coal production as 452,040 long tons.

In 1914 the gross coal mined was 955,183 tons; the net coal production was 500,722 tons and the coke produced amounted to 234,577 tons.

This shows for 1915, as compared with 1914, a decrease of 105,218 tons of gross coal mined and a decrease of 146,702 tons of net coal produced, but an increase of 4,601 tons in the production of coke.

This increase in the coke produced indicates that the coke demand formerly supplied by the Hosmer mines is now being filled by the Crow's Nest Pass Coal Company.

Crow's Nest Pass Coal Co.—This company worked in 1915 eight mines at its Coal Creek Colliery and four at its Michel Colliery. Coke-ovens were operated at both Fernie and Michel. The gross output of coal was 707,016 tons, against 778,408 tons in 1914, an increase of 18,607 tons. The quantity of coke made was 230,178 tons, as compared with 234,577 tons in 1914, an increase of 30,312 tons, which more than compensated for the loss of production at the Hosmer ovens, which in 1914 made 34,711 tons.

Of the eight mines operated at Coal Creek in 1915, that known as No. 1 East, one of four on the south side of the valley, was the largest producer. It is at an elevation of 90 feet above the central tippie and 800 feet east of it. It was opened by means of a rock tunnel, which cut the coal at 215 feet from the entry. Both main and counter tunnels were driven 3,500 feet towards the south. The cost of upkeep of the return airway having been excessive, owing to pressure of the upper part of the large seam (the airway had been driven in the lower part of the seam), the timbers were drawn and the top coat to the main roof was stripped. The roof is of hard sandstone, so no timber is required to keep it up; the permanent air-course now provided will cost little to keep it in good order. Late in the year there was installed an endless-rope haulage system, operated by an engine placed outside the mine, to deliver the coal from inside the mine right to the central tippie.

Much good work has also been done in the company's mines at Michel Colliery, which, like Coal Creek, is now in shape for production on a much larger scale than in past years, large new coal areas having been opened. Of the four mines in operation, that known as New No. 8 is most noteworthy. No. 8 seam has been redeveloped above old No. 8 workings, sealed off on account of fire. Two tunnels have been driven, and from these a four-ways system of levels is projected, the two lower now