County cokes from the State of Washington appear to fill the requirements better than any yet experimented with. These cokes although high in ash have a silica base which make it more attractive for blast furnace purposes than any others.

In regard to limestone for fluxing purposes there is no problem presented since there is within easy transportation radius an adequate and excellent quality of limestone.

The consumption of steel on the Pacific Coast which would be tributory to the establishment of a steel plant on tide water is estimated to be 1,250,000 tons per annum. This territory would take in all west of the Rocky Mountains and Mexico and the west coast of South America and British Columbia and Alaska to the north. A steel plant however, could not hope to supply this whole amount. Mr. Thane estimated that only between 500,000 and 600,000 tons could a steel plant hope to supply. Because of the huge cost of installation and the small consumption a plate mill, a rail mill or an I beam mill could not be established on a profit making basis. Mr. Thane made this quite plain; for instance he illustrated that an I beam mill such as is in operation in the East would cost from five to ten million dollars to install. If such a plant were erected on the Pacific Coast the year's consumptive requirements would be filled in three days and the plant would lie idle the remainder of the year. Mr. Thane however pointed out that there was a great opportunity for the establishment of a tin plate mill, a plant for the manufactuer of galvanized iron and one also for the manufacture of all classes of merchant bar and shapes. This should be the endeavour of any steel plant erected on the Pacific Coast. Future development and increased consumption would in time warrant the establishment of other phases of the steel industry.

Under present conditions and which have obtained for a period of twenty years the shipment of steel productions to the Orient would be greatly facilitated and a considerable part of that market is available to the steel industry of the Pacific Coast. This condition has been made favourable by the continual excess export space available on ships in the trans-Pacific trade. In other words the ships come in fully loaded and leave only partially so. This empty space therefore affords a very reasonable rate to Oriental markets.

Hitherto labour conditions operated against erecting a plant but the shipbuilding industry of the Coast has attracted and created an adequate amount of skilled labour. A great opportunity will be obtained if a steel plant can be put in operation at the time when shipbuilding will be less urgent than it is at present. This labour if taken at the time shipbuilding slackens would solve the labour problem.

[We are indebted to Mr. H. Beeman, statistician of the Board of Trade, for the use of his notes.—Editor.]

DOMINION GOVERNMENT DEBT GROWS.

Returns compiled by the Finance Department show that Canada's noted gross debt on January 31 was $1,994,563,746.33, as compared with a total gross debt of $1,226,185,543.53 on January 31, 1917. The total assets amounted on January 31 last to $999,034,039.05, leaving on that date a total net debt of $995,529,707.28. Between December 31, 1917, and January 31, 1918, the net debt increased by $21,100,703.10.

The war expenditure during January amounted to $16,603.176, or a total during the ten months up to January 31 of $188,355.015. The war expenditure during January, 1917, amounted to $24,074,932. The war expenditure during the corresponding ten-month period of the previous fiscal year totalled $194,304,681.

The revenue during January showed a decline as compared with the figures for the corresponding month last year. In January, 1918, it was $17,881,384; in January, 1917, it was $21,047,216. For the ten-month period, however, it shows an increase. Up to January 31, 1918, the revenue was $208,540,755; up to January 31, 1917, it was $187,903,565.