

Michel Creek and Elk River valleys is easy, and the same remarks applies to them; that with proper care there is room for several lines. On leaving Summit Lake the line descends into Michel Creek valley, and finds in front of it the immense horn-shaped mountain—or rather a timber-clad hill—the tip of the curving horn lying to the north and Michel Creek running along its southern side to empty at the apex of the ridge into the Elk river, which passes along its north-west base. This timbered, hilly ridge contains the great coal beds, and the line of the C. P. R. is accordingly laid on the left bank of the Elk river, next to this hill. Down the Elk river both sides are practicable for railway construction, the side selected being perhaps the easier; it is certainly the most suitable, as it skirts the mountain side containing the principal body of coal. Well down the Elk at Elk River bridge the line diverges from the river to the northward and descends along the gentle slope of the East Kootenay, which it is likely will be crossed a few miles south of Fort Steele. From the foregoing it is apparent that no engineering difficulties occur on the route to the point described, and that the cost will not be excessive.

#### ROSSLAND'S PRICES.

ONE of the things that most strongly impresses the visitor to Rossland is the reasonably low price of all kinds of goods, and the abnormally high figures commanded for rent and real estate. Contractor McCallum is building a hotel which is already rented for \$400 a month. Another wood structure, originally intended for a big hotel, has been transformed into offices and stores. It was leased for two years for \$500 a month by a speculator who turned round and sub-let it to various tenants for a total rental of \$850 a month. A town lot, which was offered a year ago for \$3,000, cannot be bought to-day for less than \$9,000. A barber shop rents for \$75 a month, and a broker's office, 15x40, for \$125 a month. On the other hand groceries, clothing, meat and other merchandise are not as dear as might be expected. Keen competition accounts for this. Some goods, such as hay, which now command high figures, are coming down as a result of lower freight rates and competition between merchants. Hay has been selling in Rossland at \$22 and \$24 per ton. The freight from Calgary to Trail, about 450 miles, is \$6 a ton. From Trail to Rossland, 12 miles, the freight is \$4 a ton, an outrageous figure. R. A. Wallace, of High River, is shipping irrigated hay to Rossland, and is likely to work up a good business, as he can lay it down for \$17 or \$18, as compared with \$24 from the south. Most of the hay used in the camps comes from Washington. It is nearly all timothy, for none but the best will be used. Irrigated Brome grass from Alberta would likely find a ready sale over here once it became known, but at present the dealers fight shy of anything but timothy. In fodder, as in everything else, people here want the best that's going. They make money easily and spend it freely, particularly the miners. There is a big market for Alberta oats. Dealers tell me that our oats take the lead. American oats, though imported in large quantities, are inferior, but the reason they have such a run is that American dealers are displaying more enterprise than Canadians. A very large proportion of merchants throughout Kootenay are Americans. There are good openings for Alberta dealers to put in farm produce here. The boats coming up daily from Northport stop at little landings every few miles along the river, and throw off huge piles of baled hay, quarters of beef, potatoes, oats, groceries, pork and other goods—all from the States. Ameri-

can creamery butter is imported in immense quantities through Spokane. It costs about 28 cents a pound laid down in Nelson, after paying 3 cents a pound duty. Eggs are 35 cents a dozen in Rossland. There is undoubtedly a good market throughout Kootenay for Alberta produce, but it is worse than useless to send any but the best.

#### THE TOWNS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Calgary Herald* recently spent some months in the mining districts of British Columbia, and his descriptions of some of the towns will interest many of our readers.

While in the Trail Creek country I spent some time in the town of Trail itself. With its 1,500 people, its great smelter—the largest in Canada—its monthly pay roll of \$60,000 and its convenient location, Trail is one of the most important business centres of South Kootenay, and from what I can see is destined to remain so. Business does not appear to be overdone, there are several first-class hotels, one of which—the Arlington—is one of the best in Kootenay. The smelter has a capacity of nearly 600 tons a day. It has in the bins enough material to keep it going for the next six months. It is being constantly enlarged and improved to keep up with the procession. Its various structures cover about three acres of ground. They include sampling works, O'Hara calciner building, reveratory calciner room, boiler and engine room, blast furnace, reveratory house, refinery building, matte granulation, racking building, store house and general office buildings. Some 300 men are employed. The owners are a company of Butte capitalists and the manager is Mr. Heinze.

The boats to and from Trail stop every mile or two to let off some adventurous prospector loaded with 100 to 150 lbs. of supplies in his blanket strapped to his back; or to throw out huge piles of beef, dump wagons and other articles for the gangs of men who are rushing construction work on the new railway which is to connect Trail with Robson. At present transportation between the two points is handicapped by shallow rapids on the river. At one particularly bad place a cable has been stretched in the bed of the stream and is picked up by the boat and passed around the capstan, the paddles are stopped and with a donkey engine working the capstan the boat creeps up the rapids at snail pace. At other places a cable is thrown ashore, carried along the bank on the shoulders of 6 or 8 men, passed round a post, and the boat capstaned over into smooth water.

#### NELSON AND KASLO

are at present the two leading towns of the Slocan. Both have good town-sites and excellent facilities, with the promise of even better in the near future. Nelson looks forward to being the terminus of the Crow's Nest Railway and as she has already a railway from the west, another from the south and two steamboat lines from the north, she will probably be for some time to come a leading centre of West Kootenay. Nelson is an old town, quite sedate. She has the best buildings, the best sidewalks, and the most paint of any Kootenay town. There is a substantial air about Nelson which will attract, not the boomster and the wild-catter, but the steady-going, respectable citizen who wants to settle down to a "slow but sure" proposition. Its population is anywhere between 1,500 and 2,000. It has not at present many working mines, in fact, only one of any pretensions—the Silver King, worked by the great Hall Mines Company, managed—some think mismanaged—from London, England.

But this is a matter to be dealt with at length and separately.

Kaslo is a prettily situated town with excellent prospects. It is the chief shipping point for the Slocan. The Slocan country, which includes the recording divisions of Slocan and Ainsworth and a good part of Nelson, has two outlets for its ore, Kaslo and Nakusp, and when the railway from Slocan lake to the Nelson and Robson branch is completed this summer it will have three. This may possibly take business from Kaslo, but the Kaslonians expect this will be more than made up by the developing of the country lying further up the Kootenay lake. A railway project is on foot to open up from this point the rich Lard-Duncan country. The sampling works at Kaslo, owned by Mr. Geo. Alexander's company, supply an excellent market for the silver lead ores of the district. The ore is bought at the sampler and paid for at once, on the basis of the value shown to be in the ore by passing 700 lbs. out of each car through the sampling works. The ore is first crushed, then pulverized, the works containing several different machines for the purpose. It is afterwards sacked and shipped to American smelters. The profit is made by securing lower rates from the sampler than is possible for the individual shipper to get. The assaying apparatus in connection with the works alone cost \$1,000 and is very complete. One of the scales is so finely adjusted that it will weigh a lead pencil mark on a piece of paper.

#### MINING ON THE SASKATCHEWAN.

THE South Edmonton *Plaindealer* says much public indignation is being expressed over the suspension of the placer mining regulations, and gives the following report of an incident during the week:

#### PUBLIC INDIGNATION EXPRESSED.

Saturday morning last the band stand near the depot presented the appearance of a gallows entertaining a victim. Suspended from the frame work above with a stout rope, hung by the neck, was the form of a man, which on closer inspection proved to be an effigy. The following inscription was affixed to the unfortunate individual, explaining the meaning thereof:

"This effigy represents the Industries of the district, strangled by order of Antideluvian Legislation."

Another placard had the following significant mottoes:

"No Mining Reserves."

"Freedom to All."

"Welcome Prosperity."

Yet another writing was:

"Tenders Wanted:

For fencing five miles or fifty of the river as a mining reserve for beginners. Tenders also wanted for an improved grizzly that works automatically. Tenders must be accompanied by accepted cheque for 10 per cent. amount of tender."

We are not aware who set up the effigy, but there is one thing sure, the sentiment expressed is that of the whole community—indignation at the present suspension of the placer mining regulations. There is now a large number of persons here anxiously waiting to file claims, and cannot do so. A still larger number, we have reason to believe, are in Omaha yet, wanting to invest in the improved mining machinery but will not do so unless they can get claims on the river in time to put in a full season. Quite a number of local men have become interested in the matter, and are anxious to take claims, but they, as well as outsiders, are blocked.