

Crow's Nest Coal.

Robert Jaffray, of Toronto, president of the Crow's Nest Pass Coal Company, arrived in Winnipeg this week. He said that he had come east by way of Spokane, where he spent a few days, and when questioned regarding the mines said:

"I spent several days at Fernie, Morrissey Creek, Michel and the works of the C. N. P. Railway company. I am highly pleased with the progress which is being made there with the character of the work being done. Mr. Stockert, the present superintendent, is laying out his plans for extensive operations. Substantial work is being done and as far as I am able to judge with full appreciation of the possibilities and future requirements. There are 130 ovens completed and some of these are not yet producing coke, but are getting ready to do so. There are about 100 ovens at Fernie, which are practically completed and are now going through the heating and drying process. The ovens at Michel are all but ready for use and can be put in service almost immediately.

1,000 Tons of Coke Per Day.

"The demand for coke in British Columbia has not been up to expectations and in order to make sure that there would be no shortage in British Columbia the company stopped shipping to Montana. We can almost any time when required, cook 1,000 tons of coke per day."

"How is this shipped from the mines?" Mr. Jaffray was asked.

"We send it via the C. P. R. to Lethbridge and from there by the Galt road to Great Falls, on the Great Northern. The objection to this route is the changes necessitated in transit which adds to the expense and besides injures the coke. The Great Northern are building a line as rapidly as possible toward Fernie from Jennings."

"When will this road be completed?"

"It would have been finished much earlier, but for the scarcity of labor owing to the heavy demand for heavy hands, but will be finished some time next year."

"How deeply is Mr. Hill interested in the coal business?"

"He is interested to the extent of 30 per cent, and no more. The Great Northern is doing all it can to rush the new road to completion."

Great Demand for Labor.

"There is a great demand for labor such as carpenters, mechanics, masons and bricklayers and miners and the dearth of the supply has caused a rise in wages. Laborers earn from \$2 to \$2.50 per day; carpenters from \$3 to \$3.50; mechanics from \$2.75 to \$3 and bricklayers and masons \$4 a day and more."

"How is the railway work progressing there?"

"I find the Crow's Nest line much improved since my last visit. Supt. Bury is pushing the work ahead rapidly."

"How many men are employed at the mines?"

"Over 1,000 men are at present employed in and about the mines and in the railways and the mines there is an unlimited demand for good labor."

"What improvements are being made at the mines?"

"We are building houses, tipples and roads; a spur line is being built from Morrissey Creek to the main line and in addition we are building a road from the tramway at the mouth of the tunnels to the tipples where the coal is loaded on to the cars for the C. P. R. and Great Northern railways."

"Is the car service sufficient for your requirements?"

"Taking into consideration the great strain which the C. P. R. is undergoing for cars on account of the mines, they are giving us a very fair service. Mr. Bury is doing the best he can to serve the coal company with the necessary transportation. The station master at Fernie told me that the works are handling 30 cars a day there of coal, coke and general merchandise."

The Output.

"Regarding the coal and coke output Mr. Jaffray said: "The output depends very much on the supply of labor and any increase will date largely on an increase in the supply of labor. At an output of 10,000 tons a day the supply will last for 180 days. I am very much pleased with the quality of the coal at Morrissey Creek, Coal Creek and Michel. At the latter place we are asking for legislation for the new railway it was represented that we would

not be able to supply enough coal and coke for British Columbia and that it would all go south. We have supplied all that we undertook to do and all that was necessary in British Columbia."

"Mr. Jaffray also said that development is proceeding all the time at the mines. There are now about twelve different tunnels being developed and it is very easy of access, although there are difficulties to overcome in the working. A variety of methods are being used in the work for developing so many tunnels and one thing they wish to get is a good domestic shipping canal and the season now being open at Morrissey Creek show a coal very promising for that purpose."

Peace River Valley.

In reference to the Peace River valley district, Mr. Jaffray said that from what he could learn there is as much more good land there as is now known in the west. When opened up it is a marvelous development would probably ensue as it is a very rich country.

Regarding the commercial situation in the B. C. mining country, Mr. Jaffray said that he found the feeling was better. There is more confidence and satisfaction amongst the business community at Fernie, and although he has not Roscoe, he learned that they are also better satisfied there. The country is now in a transition period from the speculative phase to a solid, practical business basis. Plenty of labor and capital is what is most urgently required in British Columbia. As to the labor trouble he had heard recently versions as to their termination, but was of the opinion that Mr. W. Mackenzie King would bring about a settlement.

The Great North Country.

On the train from the West Thursday afternoon was C.C. Patreid, who all summer been in charge of a Dominion government survey from Edmonton through the Peace river country. Mr. Fairchild is returning to Ottawa, where he will present his report on the summer's work. He was obliged to leave the district sooner than he intended owing to a painful accident which he sustained in having his shin bone splintered by an axe. He was then taken to the hospital at Edmonton and was compelled to travel to the nearest N. W. M. P. post at Ft. McMurray before he could get medical attendance. Mr. Fairchild gave an interesting account of his work in the Peace river country to a Free Press reporter, who met him at the station.

"The country throughout which I travelled," said Mr. Fairchild, "while probably not being, as has often been claimed, a fertile garden, has a truly wonderful climate with rich agricultural resources. The climate even at the far northern point which I reached—it took me two months to get there—never gets as cold as the winters do here. The rich timber lying to the north of the Peace river and the magnificent expanse of the Grand Plains in the distance, made it seem to me some day one of the richest districts in Canada. I left Edmonton on June 1 and travelling by water and pack horse traveled with a party of twelve men the Peace river, the Spirit river, the Peace river and Wapetia river districts. Travelling as I did in the wet season of the year up stream it was then in July that I got to the ground to be covered. I left there Oct. 7."

"Mr. Fairchild stated that they had a most excellent fall and when he left there was no sign of cold weather. In the Peace river district about twenty families have located who are all doing well and raising good crops. The Indians in this district are doing well this fall, moose and bear being very plentiful."

"The government have spent about \$5,000 throughout the Peace river country this year improving the portages and roads, and egress and access out and into the district is now much improved. The engineering districts to be met with through this district should a railroad company wish to open it up would be very easily overcome."

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