the taxation of the ordinary working miner. He favours the exemption of the miner from payment of a miner's license fee, unless he desires to locate and become interested as an owner in a claim. In such case he must pay the license fee continuously. The change is certainly desirable; the ordinary miner working merely for wages, being assuredly sufficiently charged, if he pays his Provincial poll tax and contribute, as he must whilst here resident, to Dominion general taxation, as also probably, though it may be indirectly, to Provincial or municipal local taxation.

The Premier, on the other hand, declared that he could not see his way clear to favour, as desired by the Rossland Board of Trade, the abolition of the heavier impost on mining companies, in the form of their special license tax. The fact is, that a host of $100 license fees thus collected form too large and easily obtainable a source of Provincial revenue to permit at this juncture of increasing exports, any abolition or large modification of them. In the case of a large and fairly prosperous company, the impost is not felt very appreciably. It is, however, different, no doubt, in the instances of a large number of companies of but modest resources doing development and other preliminary work without immediate returns. These feel burdensome even a $50 tax in addition to their other relatively large outlays.

The report of a meeting of the British Columbia Development Association, published in several leading London financial papers this month, makes exceedingly interesting reading, particularly when the statements therein contained are compared with those of Mr. McInnes, in his article on "The Impassable Pass," which appears in this issue of the MINING RECORD.

It would be a pity to interfere with the charter-mongering schemes of the British Columbia Devolopment Association, or in any way to blight the hopes of its shareholders. But, really, the chairman should have been a little less confiding. The White Pass is by no means recognised by the Government of British Columbia as the most feasible route to the Yukon gold fields. Moreover, every man that has visited the country designates this pass as a "death trap." Again, from all accounts, a railroad through the White Pass would be a very lengthy if not almost impossible undertaking. If it can be said of any route that it is officially recognised, the Stikene alone has any claim to the distinction, on the ground that public money has been expended to improve its trails, and very possibly the sums already appropriated for this purpose will be augmented. The proposition that the traffic in British Columbia as well as in Yukon railway charters is now assuming will, of course, be noted by the patriotic people of this province with a feeling of proper pride. The only drawback seems to be that the proprietors of charters are kept so busy negotiating the sales of their "parliamentary rights," one to another, that nobody has time to think of building the roads. After all is the present system quite perfect?

Some idea of the enormous extent of the coal areas on the east bank of Elk River in East Kootenay may be formed from the recent computation of an expert that of the fifty seams of coal found there aggregating 300 feet in thickness the production would be sufficient to supply the markets of the world for the next seventy-five years, on the basis of the present consumption of five hundred million tons per annum.

Much has already been said and written regarding the benefits that will accrue to the province in consequence of the building of the railroad through the Crow's Nest Pass, but it is a subject to which it is impossible to attach too great an importance. With the completion of the line the whole condition of affairs in respect to mining in Kootenay will be changed and a new era of increased activity and development will be inaugurated. To confirm in some measure these statements it is only necessary to compare the present prices paid by our smelters for coke with those that will rule when the Elk River coal mines are operated.

The Smelting Company at Trail, for instance, now pays from $15 to $18 per ton for Welsh coke, albeit the Company has also purchased coke made from the Wilkington, Washington, cretaceous coal at a cost of $13.40. This coke, however, is of inferior quality, containing at least eighteen per cent. ash. A few coke shipments have also been made to the works by sea route to Vancouver from Westphalia, and laid down, at a rather less cost than was paid for the Welsh product, but it is reasonable to place the average present price of imported coke at $14 per ton. When, however, the East Kootenay coal fields are operated coke will be supplied to Canadian smelters at a price certainly not in excess of $6.00 per ton, or about one-third of the present market figures. Moreover, we are informed that in quality this coke is quite equal to the best products of Pennsylvania and South Wales.

The direct result will of course be a reduction of ore treatment charges, a very largely augmented list of shipping mines throughout the country and the establishment of custom reduction works at every centrally situated spot in Kootenay, not to speak of smaller plants that will be erected by mine-owners on their own properties. And this is only considering the advantages to be derived from the building of of the road from one point of view.

It would be interesting to learn whether an estimate has ever been made of the saving that would have been affected to the C.P.R. itself in construction work and road maintenance had the transcontinental line been extended through the Crow's Nest instead