

## RETROSPECTIVE OF EAST KOOTENAY.

## Notes of Its Mining Industry Ten Years Ago.

**C**RANBROOK, EAST KOOTENAY, possesses two local weekly newspapers. One of them, the *Herald*, recently completed its tenth year of publication in that progressive town, and it marked the occasion by publishing numerous letters from old residents and other information relating to the district as it was in the nineties. As likely to be of interest to its many readers, the *MINING RECORD* has made extracts from the *Herald* concerning mining, then small in comparison with its considerable magnitude and value to-day. These extracts follow:

From a "Review of Early Days," written by the revered Father Coccola and first published in the 1902 Christmas edition of the *Herald*, now reprinted by that journal, the following excerpt is made: "In working for the Indians the St. Eugene Mission did not neglect the whites, who were visited at their homes regularly twice a year, from Windermere, East Kootenay, to Nelson and Robson, West Kootenay. In sickness or accident, the priests had to act as doctors of the body as well as of the soul. The prospectors on Perry Creek, the great North Star in 1892, and the Sullivan group shortly after, attracted men of all nationalities to the district. The Mission being then the central point, was the general rendezvous, and many a night the house was so crowded that it was impossible to walk on the floor without stepping on some of the fatigued and sleeping travellers. Miners were coming to the Mission to receive medical treatment from the fathers, with the school sisters as nurses. It became necessary to put up a new and larger house, with comfortable rooms, which was done in 1893. A larger and better church was needed, but where to get the money was a hard question to solve. Divine Providence came to the rescue. The priest told the Indians to prospect as the white men were doing, and not long afterwards Indian Pete came in with a piece of galena the size of an egg, but would not tell where he had found it. He said they had always accused the Indians of laziness; now he wanted to see what the priests were good for, and he wished them to go and see where the prospect was. This they did, in company with Mr. James Cronin, who happened to be visiting the district. Father Coccola, under the leadership of Pete, left for Moyie. Prospectors had notice of that and were on the watch, but were left behind. The place where Pete had found the galena was not very encouraging but the croppings were good indications, so three claims were staked, the St. Eugene, Peter and Loreto. Men were put to work and the prospectors took the appearance of a mine, which at last was sold and with the proceeds Pete had a house built and his farm stocked. The balance went to build the beautiful new church which is the pride of the Indians and the admiration of the whites. . . . The construction of the Crow's Nest Pass railway necessitated the building of a larger

hospital, with accommodation for 40 patients. During an epidemic of fever, 81 patients were treated at one time, and had it not been for the St. Eugene hospital and the Sisters of Charity, who by their devotion to the sick won the affection of the public, hundreds of miners and railway men would have perished."

In a laudatory notice of the late Colonel James Baker, who in 1895-1898 was provincial minister of mines, the *Herald* says: "In 1884 Colonel Baker joined his son, V. Hyde Baker, in Canada, and together they journeyed to British Columbia, by way of the United States, coming into East Kootenay with a pack train via Sand Point, Idaho. First the colonel took up land on Skookumchuck Creek, but this was abandoned the following year, and what is now Cranbrook was purchased. . . . Michael Phillips, of Tobacco Plains, told Colonel Baker that he believed there was coal in the Crow's Nest Pass, and the latter, in company with the Hon. F. W. Aylmer and the Fernie Brothers, immediately put men to prospect and find out what the coal measures really were. It was soon demonstrated that the seams were of immense size, and the fields were eventually sold to the Crow's Nest Pass Coal Company. The discovery of coal in paying quantities in the district made the advent of a railway a necessity. Colonel Baker worked early and late to this end, which became a fact in 1898, by the opening of the Crow's Nest Pass railway."

E. Elwell, of Cranbrook, who arrived in East Kootenay in June, 1906, after telling of his experiences up till the time of the construction of the Crow's Nest railway, says: "Then the railway came, disturbing the peace and calm of the valley of the Kootenay—not that it wasn't welcome—and with it came the change. Prospectors rushed into the country and mining was the absorbing topic and engaged the attention of all. This passed away, leaving good work done in the shape of the St. Eugene, North Star and Sullivan mines and other developed prospects."

A. E. Watts says, in relating his early experiences in the district: "At that period the total payroll on all the workings at or near Moyie would be about \$2,000 per annum. A very few years after that the payroll amounted to nearly \$1,000,000 per annum. At the time spoken of James Cronin, the original owner, had two men at work on the St. Eugene, and the first time I met him he was himself packing supplies up to the mine. With this the reader can compare conditions to-day and the work going on around Moyie. The St. Eugene has 18 miles of underground work, and is down 1,000 ft. below the level of the lake; and it has in sight the largest bodies of clear silver-lead ore on the continent."

M. A. Beale says: "When I arrived in Fort Steele in May, 1897, Southeast Kootenay was practically unknown; Fort Steele was the only town and its residents were then congratulating themselves over the change in the postal service from a monthly to a fortnightly delivery, and the mail was brought in by