

THE COMMERCIAL IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

FERNIE COKING INDUSTRY.

The illustration herewith shows the coke ovens at Fernie, British Columbia. Fernie is one of the new towns of East Kootenay, in southeastern British Columbia, which has come into existence practically since the construction of the Crow's Nest Pass railway. Near Fernie are situated vast deposits of a very fine quality of coking coal. This industry was developed as soon as the construction of the railway made it possible to undertake a great industry of this nature, for without transportation facilities, coal mining could not, of course, be carried on to advantage. Southeastern British Columbia is rich in mineral resources, but the

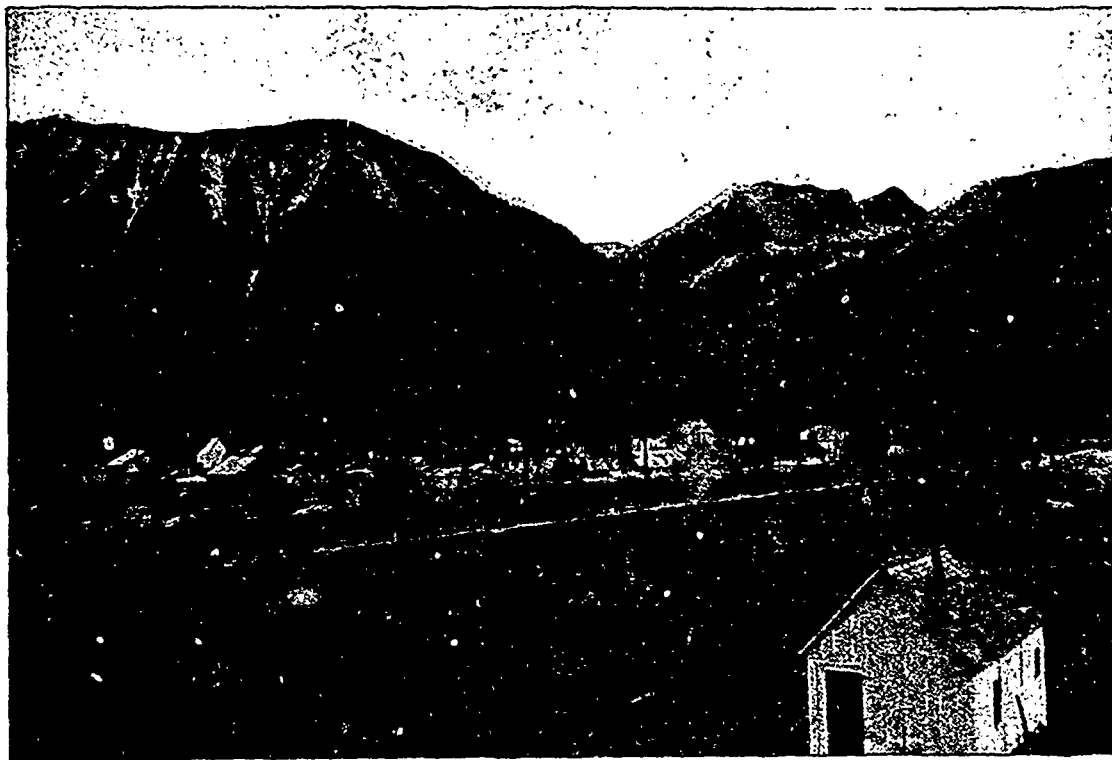
Pacific railway company says of the coal deposits of the Crow's Nest Pass:

Besides gold, copper and silver-lead, East Kootenay also possesses what are believed to be the greatest coal deposits in the world, which already have a wide reputation, both on account of the quality and the quantity of coal extracted. These coal fields, which are without doubt the best and most extensive undeveloped on the continent, are situated in the southeast part of the district, and are traversed by the Crow's Nest Pass railway. The first or eastern deposits are not far from the west end of the Crow's Nest Pass, through the Rocky Mountains, and consist of twenty seams of coal, one above another.

development of these coal mines has already commenced, and not only is coal supplied east and west, but nearly 200 coke ovens are already in operation and their number will be largely augmented as the demand for coal increases. In other portions of southern East Kootenay are deposits of coal which are now being prospected.

Agassiz Experimental Farm.

British Columbia is not usually thought of as an agricultural province, notwithstanding the fact that there are some very rich farming lands there and that every year the industry gathers volume and importance. The Dominion government experimental farm at Agassiz is doing good work in showing what the agricultural capabilities of the country are and has drawn attention to the fact that there are many lines of agricultural and horticultural work which can be as well or better done there under the equable climate of the Pacific coast as anywhere on this continent. In the report of Superintendent Sharpe for



Coke Ovens at Fernie, B.C.

coal deposits are by no means the least important of this great underground wealth. Years before the railway was built, the existence of these coal deposits was known, and the development work since done has proved the great extent and enormous value of the deposits. The existence of a high grade coking coal in this region is of special importance. In view of the fact that southeastern British Columbia is a great mineral country, possessing untold wealth in gold, silver, lead, copper and many other minerals. The successful operation of many mines requires smelters, either in connection therewith or available at reasonable expenses for transportation thereto. Here we have coal and coke for smelting along with the other minerals. A recent publication issued by the Canadian

clearly visible along the mountain ridges and stretching to the summits. Fourteen of these seams are cannel coal, but the lower ones are anthracite in their nature. Three of the seams are respectively 15, 20 and 30 feet wide. Another great series of seams is that in the Elk River Valley, where they extend for a distance of 40 miles; they range from 3 to 30 feet in thickness—11 seams in all, making a total of 148 feet in thickness of coal exposed. An analysis and test of these coals have been made and the results as shown in the government reports, prove that they compare favorably with the best coals of Pennsylvania. Of coking coal there is an abundance, which is proving of great importance to the smelters of British Columbia, it being indispensable for the treatment of refractory ores. The

1899 there is a good deal of information about the development of these industries in British Columbia. The year does not appear to have been an entirely satisfactory one. Hay, grain, roots and vegetables yielded fairly well and under good demand the prices for these were higher than usual, but the fruit crop was an exceedingly poor one. Hedges and forest trees made splendid growth. Many eastern forest trees such as black walnut, sugar maple, elm and ash are doing well on the farm. Nut trees, such as Japanese and English walnuts, chestnuts, almonds and filberts, which are being tested are doing well and some of them have already yielded nuts.

Seventy-three varieties of oats were tested, many of which yielded well and produced a nice, plump berry. In spite of unfavorable weather. Fifty-