

remains to be determined. The quality of the ore is admirable for this purpose, and when it is remembered that the best coal and coke on the continent is produced within 100 miles or so, and that there is abundance of limestone for fluxing upon adjoining property, it will be seen that there is nothing to prevent the establishment of steel works if the property should prove to be of sufficient extent to justify this step. In the opinion of good judges such expectations are not thought to be too sanguine, and the effect upon the Province in the event of such being done would be relatively as great as that produced by the opening of the coal mines at Fernie and the introduction of cheap coal and coke. Pig iron is worth \$20 per ton to-day in British Columbia. Standard section steel rails are worth \$40 and light mine section steel rails \$60 per ton. Pig iron can be manufactured at Kitchener for \$10 per ton which would give heavy steel rails at \$20 and lighter sections at \$25, and castings and machinery used in the Province would be similarly affected and a great saving thereby made in the outlay for a mining plant. There is also the further possibility of an export trade, as there are no steel works upon the Pacific coast, and no other deposit of iron ore discovered which, without admixture, would produce similar metal to that of the Kitchener deposit.

If a steadily increasing ore production is any indication, there is a section of the Slocan district at any rate whose progress has not been seriously impeded by the decline in the price of lead and the other unfavourable conditions which have constituted the excuse for the closing down of so many of the silver-lead mines in the vicinity of Sandon, McGuigan and Whitewater. The difference may be explained that a large proportion of the mines round Slocan Lake produce "dry" ores which are in special demand by the local smelters at the present time. In consequence the ore shipments from this locality fall only two or three hundred tons below the total production of 1900, and by the close of the year it is possible that an increase of seventy-five per cent. will be recorded. The gain is largely due to one mine, the Arlington, which is making a wonderfully good showing, and it is now announced that a contract has been let to send a thousand tons of ore a month from this property to the Nelson smelter. Another steady producer is the Hewitt, while the Enterprise is also making a fair showing.

A return of fatal accidents published in the *Engineering and Mining Journal*, shows that the industry of coal mining is carried on in British Columbia with a greater regard for the safety of human life than in any Western State of the Union. There is a great difference in the percentage rate of fatal accidents between the eastern

and western portions of the continent. This may be explained by the rougher conditions prevailing and larger number of mines undergoing more or less experimental development where regulations to preserve human life have not yet acquired the full efficacy which experience gives. Over a period of ten years the average number of lives lost per thousand employed per annum was, in Colorado, 4.90; Indian Territory, 5.02; New Mexico, 7.71; Washington, 8.84, and British Columbia, 3.23. Utah we omit because an appalling disaster last year has raised its average out of all comparative significance. At the same time the British Columbia total was higher per thousand employed during 1900 than in any previous year since 1893. We hope that this does not indicate that the Province is going back in its splendid record in the matter of the regulation of coal mines. British Columbia is the only western territory in which coal mining is carried on, in which the loss of life records compare favourably with those of eastern coal mining districts. We may well be proud of that, and it is a position from which it is to be hoped the Province will never be obliged to recede.

We received the Memorial addressed by the Mining Association to the Governor-General in Council, just too late for comment of last month. It does not, however, call for any extended notice now as the matters with which it deals have been fully and freely discussed in our columns independently of, and prior to the publication of, this Memorial. We are not by any means in agreement with the conclusions of the Memorial, and still less so with the policy of distributing such a document broadcast. It is much easier to give a dog a bad name than to prove that the animal does not deserve it. We regret exceedingly that a representative body like the Mining Association should have weakened its case in reference to questions where criticism was just, by such extravagance of statement and method of publication as have characterised the Memorial.

The census returns for British Columbia show in a most remarkable manner what the industry of lode mining is able to accomplish for a country. The increase of population of nearly 100 per cent. which is disclosed must almost entirely be due to the development of coal and lode mining in the Province. The growth of lode mining has been almost coincident with the period of the census. The census returns in 1891 had just been sent in when the Slocan district had been discovered, an event which caused the first inrush of population. This, however, was an excessively fluctuating population. Really steady and permanent growth of population depends not on a rush to rich discoveries but on the metal output maintained. In this respect British