

THE CROW'S NEST PASS DISTRICT.

Leaving Pincher I crossed the mountains through the Crow's Nest Pass, and spent a day at Fernie in the great coal districts of the Crow's Nest country where some large companies are operating. At the time of my visit the output there was about 1,200 tons a day, and a great many men were employed in this work. It is quite a large sized town which has been built up there. A large proportion of this coal is used for making coke which is very valuable to the miners in the interior of British Columbia. There were 300 coke ovens in operation at Fernie at that time, and it was very interesting to go about among these and have explained the particulars in regard to the conversion of coal into coke. One hundred more coke ovens were being built at Fernie at that time. At St. Michael also twenty-five miles east of Fernie 200 coke ovens were in course of construction and some fine seams of coal are being opened there. All the coke from these ovens is used for the smelting of ores in the mining districts. Such coke as was used formerly had to be brought long distances, some of it all the way from Wales and other countries. By the working of these coal mines, and the production of coke in the Crow's Nest Pass district, the cost of coke has been greatly reduced and mining operations have received an encouraging stimulus. I went into one of the mines and spent a morning there, and I could not but be struck with the enormous quantities of coal in sight. This seam which has been worked by the coal company was from 6 to 9 feet thick, most of it running 7 or 8 feet, and while an immense quantity of coal has been taken out they are really only making channels through their 6 foot seam, and leaving, I presume, nearly three-fourths of the coal standing untouched, as support for the roof. This does away with the necessity of propping the roof of the mine, and they are working it in this way right through to the other side of the mountain, and when that point is reached the remainder of the coal will be taken out, sufficient propping being used as they come back to prevent accidents. The supply in that one mine will probably last for several years.

By Mr. Clancy :

Q. How deep do they go for that coal ?

A. They do not have to dig down at all as in many other mines. The entrance to the mine is at the side of the mountain running into the seam a little above the level. It is about 30 or 40 feet above the railway where entrance is made. The mountains there seem to be literally filled with coal and evidences of coal seams are very common.

By Mr. Robinson (Elgin) :

Q. Is the coal at that mine anthracite or bituminous ?

A. The coal is bituminous. The anthracite coal is found nearer to the foot-hills of the mountains. It is near Banff, at Anthracite and Canmore.

Q. This would be a softer coal then ?

A. This is a softer coal, and is said to be very much like the Welsh coal, which is highly esteemed for the manufacture of coke for mining operations.

FARM CROPS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.

Passing through farther westward, I arrived at the experimental farm in Agassiz early in September, and found the crops there very promising.

When the returns were all in we found that the twelve best varieties of oats in the experimental plots at Agassiz had averaged 95 bushels 17 pounds per acre. The Golden Tartarian headed the list with 103 bushels 18 pounds to the acre. The great difference in the climate in British Columbia as compared with the North-west and