

THE COMMERCIAL IN THE KOOTENAY

Visit to Southeastern British Columbia Towns—
Fernie, Fort Steele, Cranbrook, Moyie.

Entering British Columbia by the Crow's Nest Pass railway, Fernie is the first town we reach. It is over the first and main ridge of the Rockies and in the valley of the Elk river, near the junction with Coal creek. It is entirely surrounded by mountains which are covered with a thick growth of spruce, tamarac and cedar trees, reaching to the summit in most instances. The valley is also well wooded and the river winding out and in among the trees, forms some charming spots in which to spend an idle half hour.

case in all towns of such rapid growth, the buildings are all frame, but those in the newer portion of the town are, for the most part, well built, considerable attention also being paid to appearances, so that the town does not give one the impression of having grown up in a night.

Although scarcely two years old it has a population of about 1,800 and is well supplied with business places, including a branch of the Bank of Commerce. It has Presbyterian, Episcopalian and Roman Catholic churches and a Methodist church

test grade obtainable. These mines are 525 feet above Fernie, and are reached by a five mile spur constructed by the Canadian Pacific Railway and an engine and two train crews are employed night and day bringing the coal to Fernie, where the coke ovens are located. The coal is at present being obtained from two tunnels No. 1 being on the north side of Coal Creek valley, and No. 2 on the south side. These mines, although on the same relative level, are not working the same seam. They are connected by a thousand foot trestle in the centre of which is located the screening and loading machinery. The coal is brought by horses to near the mouth of the tunnels in cars containing about a ton and a half each, from whence it is taken by two 70 horsepower electric motors to the mechanically driven sifters, which separate the slack from the coarser coal. The sack drops from the sifters into specially constructed cars placed below,



View in Fernie, B. C.
Photo by Steele & Co., Winnipeg.

It was not until the fall of 1898 that the townsite of Fernie was cleared and buildings erected and even then building operations were so delayed, on account of the scarcity of lumber, that it was well on into winter, and in some cases nearly spring, before the buildings were completed. Previous to this a number of log houses had been run up across the railway track in what is now termed the old town. Here a number of stores were opened in the spring of 1898, the goods being brought in by pack trains as the railway did not reach this point until June of that year. As is the

is now being built. It has electric light, telephone and waterworks systems which are operated by the Coal company. The water is taken from Coal creek at a point about three miles from the town, the force of gravity giving a pressure of 120 lbs. in the hydrants. The principal factor in the building up and maintenance of this town is the coal mines, owned by the Crow's Nest Pass Coal Company, from which a very high grade of coking coal is obtained. A test made of this coal by the British government for use on their men-of-war proved it to be one of the

while the coarser coal is received on a travelling table 60 feet long and 5 feet wide, which travels at a speed of 40 feet per minute. This is fitted with friction gears, which regulate the discharge into the cars. The grade of the track is such that no power is required to move the loaded cars from under the coal chutes. Many labor saving devices tend to lessen the expense and increase the rapidity of handling the coal. It has not been found necessary as yet to use the crushing machines, as sufficient slack is obtained in mining the coal. It might be well to explain here that the slack