

sive. Labor and supplies are also high. Hence the narrow margin of profit may disappear.

We instance the Fernie and Hosmer collieries, as it is upon these that the tax will fall most heavily. The Vancouver Island collieries, in spite of all the advantages of cheap mining, plentiful labor and easy access to tide water, have maintained an unreasonably high price for their coal and coke. The lands of the largest collieries on tide water have been exempt from royalty. Thus the tax will be no such hardship to these as it will to the eastern producers. This fact merits consideration. A flat, uniform tax does not remedy inequalities.

Many other special features governing the production of coal and coke in the Rocky Mountain districts could be adduced. They all strengthen the conviction that British Columbia will strangle a growing industry and will frighten capital away from her coal fields if the new tax is imposed. Her neighbors will undoubtedly reap the benefit of this.

Cheap coke is a necessity to the smelters of West Kootenay and the Boundary.

THE PORT HOOD DISASTER.

The distressing news that ten men had been killed by an explosion in the south workings of the Port Hood-Richmond Railway & Coal Company was received on February 7th.

Details received later announced that all the bodies had been recovered and that no serious damage had been done to the mine. A rescue party, led by Manager McLellan, succeeded in bringing the bodies to the surface within three hours of the disaster.

Six of the victims were natives of Cape Breton and four were Bulgarians. Nine of them were married.

After hearing evidence of identification, the Coroner postponed the inquest until the 12th inst.

As the Port Hood collieries are by no means gasey, and as the inspector, after making his rounds two hours before the accident, reported all safe, it is probable that the explosion was caused by the accidental ignition of powder. The posture in which the men were found indicates that they had no warning whatever. The bodies were disfigured to such an extent that their clothing was the principal means of identification.

The Coroner's report will throw more light upon the subject.

DRILL TRIALS ON THE RAND.

After a thorough trial of the overground and underground work of a number of rival types of drills, the *South African Mines'* Trophy has been awarded to the "Gordon" drill. Although several of its competitors ran it close in overground work, where drilling was done in

four granite blocks; yet underground the "Gordon" proved itself superior in all respects.

The contest, arranged by the enterprising *South African Mines*, was conducted under the supervision of qualified authorities. It was watched with keen interest by mining men all over the Rand, and the results have been commented upon widely.

The conclusions reached by those who followed the contest keenly are important. The importance of improving the quality and tempering of the steels in general use, the desirability of attaching to all drills in use on the Rand a water-feed or dust-allaying device to prevent phthisis, and the advisability of using higher air pressures, are amongst the points accentuated.

THE HALL MINING AND SMELTING COMPANY.

Press despatches of February 7th announced that all the assets of the Hall Mining & Smelting Company, Nelson District, B.C., had been placed in the hands of a receiver on behalf of British bondholders. The plant has not been in operation since August of last year. It is believed that after re-organization, the smelter will be remodelled and the company's mine, the Silver King, will be worked.

During the fiscal year ending June 30th, 1906, the Silver King produced 1,187 tons of ore, averaging 25.5 ounces silver per ton and 4.3 per cent. copper. Whilst mining operations showed a profit of about \$6,000, the smelting loss more than counterbalanced this.

Reliable authorities state that the Silver King is a valuable property and that both the mine and the smelter can be operated with profit. The smelter includes a Huntington-Heberlein installation for the desulphurization of galena ores.

Apparently the management of the company's affairs has been handicapped by internal complications. No other reason is assignable for the closing down and the appointing of a receivership.

Editorial Notes.

The ninety-fourth meeting of the American Institute of Mining Engineers will be held in New York on the three days beginning February 18th. The election of officers will take place on the 18th.

The Toronto Exhibition Commission has as yet made no provision for the display of mining machinery. This is a very serious omission. It is hard to understand why the mining industry should be neglected thus.

Mr. Gray's first article on the mining operation of the Dominion Coal Company is a valuable contribution to our knowledge of that company's vast undertakings in Cape Breton. Mr. Gray writes with accuracy and a complete familiarity with his subject.