PROGRESS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.—The Bureau of Provincial information for British Columbia, reviewing the industrial condition of the past year, gives the output of metalliferous mines of the province at 1,276,000 tons. The coal mined amounted to 168,000 tons. The total value of the mining output was $19,200,000, which was nearly $2,000,000 increase over the previous year, notwithstanding the strikes which paralyzed the industry in the early part of the past year.

With the exception of the salmon pack, which is greatly below the average, all other industries show large increases. Cut timber during the year was 15 per cent. greater; the dairying output one-third; the fruit marketed, 35 per cent. increase; halibut and other fishery, 40 per cent., the value of the total productions of the province was about $30,000,000. The value of exports was $21,000,000, an increase of $5,000,000 over the previous year.

THE TRAVELERS' INSURANCE CO. announces a total cash income last year of $11,670,000, an increase of $1,460,000 over 1902. The accident department had an increase of $745,000 in premium income, and in the life department of $364,000. The increase in life insurance in force was $9,600,000. Vice-President Lunger, in a letter to the agents, says:—"The decline in values has not been without its compensations. The values of securities have been shaken down to what may be called a 'hard-pan basis'; the folly of laws compelling the companies to value securities at market rates on December 31 has been demonstrated, and rates of interest above the average have been obtained on new investments. In our case the rate of interest on the sums invested during 1903, amounting to over $6,000,000, is nearly one-half of 1 per cent. in excess of the rate obtained on new investments in 1902."

MESSRS. FETHERSTONHAUGH & CO., patent solicitors, Canada Life building, furnish us with the following weekly list of patents granted to Canadians in the following countries. Any further information may be readily obtained from them direct. CANADIAN PATENTS—A. J. Cross, upholsterings for caskets and the like. A. A. Barthlemes, piano-actions. C. E. Johnson, fuel composition. D. Taylor and W. M. Taylor, gas igniting appliances. R. C. Smith, machines for washing clothes. J. Mills, dental instruments. N. C. Best, crude oil burners. J. D. Nasmith, baking ovens. R. E. McCaskill and T. J. Jamieson, grain doors. J. W. Virtue, machines for the purpose of quartering or cutting apples or other fruit into different numbers of equal parts. H. Spurrier, combined vacuum gage and alarm. F. J. Mathers, automatic gate. T. Scott, centrifugal pumps. F. Cords, gates. R. Burnside, vibration cups. AMERICAN PATENTS—A. J. Burton, band-saw clapboard machine. H. Dreany, explosive. F. Gregoire, railway brake. W. J. Hammill, fanning-mill. S. Lount, turbine-engine. W. L. McLean, steam engine for curd cutting machines.

A LAWYER ON SUICIDE.—At a meeting of the Chicago Life Underwriters' Association, R. W. Breckinridge, an Omaha (Neb.), attorney, made some interesting comments on "Suicide and Its Relation to Life Insurance." He attributes suicide to two causes, degeneracy and heredity, and said the strenuous modern life brought nervous and abnormal conditions conducive to suicide. Mr. Breckinridge regards suicidal tendency as an insidious disease that furnishes one of the greatest problems to life insurance. He asserted that it was worse than consumption, because modern science was reaching a point where the latter could be arrested or cured. Mr. Breckinridge believed the tendency of court decisions is to uphold the suicide clause in life insurance policies. In his opinion the length of time during which suicide will invalidate a policy should be increased to five or seven years.—"The Standard."

WORTHLESS BUSINESS.—The "Conservative News" says that "business which cannot be placed and paid for is "worse than worthless."

"Not taken business is not only wholly unprofitable to the agent, but a source of actual loss to him in the matter of time involved in writing the case, and the expense or medical examination, which must be paid by him.

"In addition to wasting his time and suffering financial loss, on account of this straw business, the agent demoralizes himself and loses the respect of the company. Paid for business is the measuring rule which the company applies to field men. Business written means nothing until the same is paid for in cash. The moderate producer whose business is fine in quality and promptly paid for in cash, is worth more to himself and the company than the large producer of business of an inferior character."

RECENT LEGAL DECISIONS.

FIRE INSURANCE, CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO DO BUSINESS.—The United States Federal Court, in Iowa, holds, that the provisions of the Iowa insurance law, which makes it unlawful for two or more insurance companies doing business in that state to enter into combinations or agreements relating to the rates to be charged for insurances, or agreements as to the amounts of commissions to be allowed to agents by their agreements as to the manner of transacting fire insurance in the State, are unconstitutional and void. The reason given is that the law deprives persons carrying on a certain line of business of liberty to contract, which is secured to all persons by the Federal constitution, and also of the equal protection of the laws. The court points out that insurance is not commerce, and that the many cases in which the commercial clause has been under consideration are not in point. The court also disregards those cases arising under the police power, as such involve the protection of the health of individuals of the community, and this element does not enter into the conduct of insurance business. After commenting upon the fact that the liberty of the constitution has been defined by every court in the country, and quoting the definitions of many judges, the court summarizes the right to make or enforce contracts. When the right to contract ceases the right to do business is at an end. To single out insurance companies and abridge their right to contract is denying them equal protection of the laws. The action was taken by several foreign insurance companies against the State insurance commissioner to restrain him from taking action against them under the statute in question. In concluding his judgment for the insurance companies, Judge McPherson said: I do not hold that insurance companies can combine and conspire to accomplish any desired purpose. No such question is involved. I am only holding that insurance companies may make the usual contracts that all other persons and corporations may make, and which the statute seeks to take away from them. (Greenwich Insurance Company v. Carroll State Auditor, 125 Federal Reporter, 121).