

valley to the depth of 675 feet. The coal has not been reached, although the prospects for it are good; but it may be very deep in that locality.

From the energy and enterprise of these different coal companies in carrying on their works and opening out new coalmines, thus investing a large amount of capital, we may expect a considerable increase of the output of coal during the year we are now commencing. All these works will doubtless soon add very largely to the output of coal of this district, and cause such an influx of workmen as will give a fresh impetus to trade and contribute in no small degree to the general welfare and prosperity of the Province.

The coal mines gave employment to 874 persons, whose salaries ranged from \$2.50 to \$5 per day.

THE KOOTENAY COUNTRY.

The Kootenay Country began to attract attention on account of the discovery of rich alluvial mines on Wild Horse Creek in 1863.

A floating population flocked into this hitherto unknown region and were surprised to find that they traveled through some of the most enchanting landscape scenes: large, level, grassy plains, with running creeks of pellucid water, fringed with willow borders; foot-hills abounding with the rich bunch grass peculiar to that portion of this continent.

The rush of gold-seekers, feverish with the flying reports of the richness of Wild Horse Creek, created a dearth of provisions, for though the country was a packer's paradise—high rates of freight and abundance of feed for the mules—yet the men outnumbered the supplies, and the consequence was, that many men had to go out and "spread themselves," some living with the Indians some fishing and living on "the muzzle of their guns." One party of 60 or 70 went up to the head waters of the Columbia, built themselves houses for the winter, fished, trapped, and shot deer, bear, geese and the far-famed Rocky Mountain sheep, whose horns alone will sometimes weigh 35 pounds; and thus they waited for the Spring breezes and warm sunshine.

At length "Earth burst her Winter-chains," the boys returned to the camp, pack-trains began to come in, but it had fared ill with those who were obliged to stay on the Creek. Some who had secreted their provisions came out fat in the Spring, but many who had come down to Reynold's corral to welcome in the first train, smiled their approval of Dakin and his flour but they had not strength to get up a laugh.

The diggings however turned out well and most of those who had wintered there made a good haul, though at one time in their distress they would gladly have given \$2 or \$3 a pound for flour, and one cargo was sold for \$2.50 a pound, tobacco at \$15 and oats became a recognized medium of exchange, anyone planting a few pounds of oats on the counter could get anything he wanted but food. Opium I have seen sold at its weight in gold, or \$190 a pound.

The creek and benches paid well up to Gold-Hill Tunnel, when the supply seemed to scatter and come from every direction.

Several tunnels were driven—notably the Perseverance—to tap the back channel, and these claims were afterwards worked from the surface, making the tunnel carry the dune and washing everything right through. Other hydraulic claims were then opened up and paid well, as for instance the Nip and Tuck which has been worked continuously to within a year or two. Several other creeks were afterwards prospected and good results obtained.

Perry Creek, a branch of the St Mary's, turned out well; and Finkay Creek, both from the Selkirk Range, the latter never having been much worked on account of the difficulty of bringing in water on the rocky benches; but that country has not been half prospected, and may turn out lots of gold yet.

The scene has changed; abundance of flour and bacon can be had there as cheap as in Victoria and a person to see now the splendid valley of the Kootenay, can hardly conceive of the distress which existed twenty years ago, for want of the staff of life.

On coming to the river above Galbraith's Ferry, the open terraces of bunch grass and river bottom lands are dotted with cattle; the long stretch of open country, mostly good arable land, without timber in the valley, will make one of the most desirable valleys in the Province when railway communication or increased population affords a market for the produce. The whole of the magnificent valley from a few miles above the ferry to the Columbia Lakes—about 50 miles—is one long stretch of farming land, and at the crossing of the Kootenay, just below where it issues from its magnificent rocky portals; so nearly is it on a level with the waters of the Lakes, that a plough furrow would carry the water across the mile or two of thinly timbered meadows from the Kootenay to the head of the Columbia. Striking up to a spur of the Rockies we see the headwaters of this mighty river, and come upon the upper reaches of this extensive lacustrine plateau from the head.

The climate here is milder than would be imagined possible on the slopes of the Rocky Mountains, but may be judged from the fact of stock having been wintered there in '66-7 by Lord and Johnson, and since by the cattle owners without a bite except the grass, and were fit for the butcher long before any could be driven into the mines, from other quarters.

Farther to the east and down the river from the mines the valley widens out again into the Tolacoo Plains, a region of unlimited grazing capacity, to say nothing of the splendid farms awaiting a cultivator along the river bottom lands and at the mouths of the branch streams, as Sheep Creek, St. Mary's, Elk River, etc. Below the tobacco plains the river enters United States territory with a large sweep passing