

a matter-of-fact manner, what do we find? That none of these possibly productive areas are sufficiently developed, or in fact prospected, to be taken into consideration to-day in discussing the fuel problem. In fact none of these fields have yet been afforded transportation facilities. In order to make a coal field productive transportation facilities must be furnished of such a character that the lowest possible freight rates can be secured. In order to open a colliery of sufficient capacity to be operated in competition with those already developed in the Province vast expenditures of capital must be made first for thoroughly prospecting a field, and next for mining plants of sufficiently large capacity to compete with those already established. Comparatively few of the residents of the Province fully realize the extent of the operations at present being carried on on Vancouver Island and at the Crow's Nest Pass. The statistics showing an output of about a million and a half tons of coal during the year hardly convey an adequate idea of what is necessary in the shape of invested capital, labour and transportation facilities, to produce such a result. It will probably be news to many of the readers of the MINING RECORD to learn that on Vancouver Island alone upwards of two thousand employees are engaged in the coal mines, and in the Crow's Nest Pass at the present time there are upwards of one thousand.

The combined capital invested in mining plants as they stand to-day represent figures which run into millions, and which were it not for the very large export trade, which is enjoyed by all the operating collieries would be very largely in excess of the present requirements of the Province, because when the home demand is considered it represents merely a fraction of the present output. So far as Vancouver Island is concerned the erection of new smelters will in the near future cause the home demand to be very largely increased. The same argument would also apply to Southern British Columbia, but these demands will hardly increase to such an extent for some time to come to tax the capacity of the operating collieries and coking plants.

So far as the export trade is concerned the strong possibilities are that because of the introduction of oil fuel in California this trade will fall off in the future, while the trade from Montana and neighbouring interior States directly tributary to the Crow's Nest Pass promises to increase and develop with phenomenal strides. Such being the fact the question naturally arises, whether under existing circumstances the management of the Crow's Nest Coal Co. will consider favourably an increased demand in British Columbia for fuel when their export trade taxes the producing capacity of their mining plants. The home demand from the Boundary country is increasing daily, the Grand Forks smelter has been enlarged to an increased capacity of treating 1500 tons of ore per diem, or double its former capacity. The Greenwood smelter has been increased to a capacity of treating 800 tons per diem, or to double its former size. The Montreal or Boston Co. has purchased the Boundary Falls smelter and will shortly be treating 400 tons per diem. The Trail smelter has been enlarged as well as the Nelson. Besides this, there is the fact to be taken into consideration that the mines which have been producing low-grade ore will undoubtedly increase in number because it has been demonstrated that the decline in copper prices, although very seriously affecting the profits, was not sufficient to close these mines down as was anticipated, consequently the owners of many properties who have been hesitating as to whether it was desirable to operate need do so no longer.

There is no question but that the visible coal supply in the Crow's Nest Pass, from the workable seams known to exist, is practically inexhaustible, but all the available points for opening mines on an economical basis are controlled by the present Crow's Nest Pass Coal Co., except one, and even to equip and open a mine at that point would involve a much larger expenditure of capital than has been required for those already opened. Aside from this point there is absolutely none other in the field west of the summit of the Rockies where any conservative coal operator would make an attempt to equip a colliery in the expectation of competing with the present company. Such an attempt would mean, first an expensive outlay for diamond-drill boring to locate the seam, because the coal measures dip to the east at angles from 12 to 15 degrees in the mines already opened, consequently to start a new mine it would be necessary to locate east of the present ones, and beyond the boundary of the holdings of the Crow's Nest Pass Co. In addition to this would be the difficulty of building branch lines of railway to connect with the main line for transportation purposes.

This subject cannot be fully discussed in one article, but in the foregoing the writer has briefly attempted to outline the present conditions surrounding the fuel problem in British Columbia and afford food for thought as to what may be looked for in the future.

#### B. C. IN LONDON.

HEAVY FALL IN LE ROIS IN LONDON—THE SHARES WITH-  
IN A FRACTION OF £2—YMIR REPORT AND MEETING  
—CANADIAN EXHIBITS TRANSFERRED FROM LONDON  
TO NORTHAMPTON.

(From Our Own Correspondent.)

UNDOUBTEDLY the most important development in connection with the British Columbian market in London since my last report is the sensational slump in the shares of the Le Roi, which, on the very alarming news cabled from Rossland, fell to within a small fraction of £2, a quotation never reached even in the black days which followed the collapse of the London & Globe group. The following is the official circular which brought about this bad break:

"In consideration of the fact that 24 528 tons of ore mined during the month of March were estimated to yield a profit of only \$9,950, the directors cabled to Mr. Mackenzie asking whether it would not be politic to conserve the ore reserves pending a reduction of working expenses, and his reply (dated 27th April) has been received to-day 28th April:—

"Mr. Mackenzie says that with copper and silver at present prices, and fuel and freight at present prices, the March grade of ore leaves no profit, and he has already begun to sort the ore more closely, making April grade up to \$10.50 per ton. He also reports that he is experiencing difficulty with smelting operations, and has reason to believe a considerable percentage of the copper contents are not being recovered. He is, therefore, going to clean up at the smelter to ascertain to what extent this is so. If the clean up shows losses which the difference between assay values and recovery indicate, Mr. Mackenzie strongly advises treating the ore on hand at the smelter, and then to shut down smelting works entirely until we can obtain satisfactory freight and fuel rates, and prices have risen for metals, to push ahead with developments in the lower levels, work being done by contract, and reduce expenses to the lowest possible point.

"Mr. Mackenzie further informs us that he has written fully on this subject, and advises delaying action pending the receipt of his letter and the result of the clean up at the smelter."

You will of course understand that this was a very bad blow to the British Columbia market, and quite