

of the value of \$17,495,954, the output of the mines has steadily increased year by year until in 1907, it reached the figures—standing for a record at present, but likely to be beaten when this year's returns come in—of \$25,882,560.

And yet, when the circumstances of the case are considered, the output of last year, 1908, though some two and a half million dollars less in value than that of 1907, will be considered a much more remarkable evidence of the great and growing wealth of the mines of the Province. Because, whereas the record of 1907 was made with the prices of metal at a top figure, those prices—at least as regards copper and silver, two of the principal metals produced in the Province—were cut in half in 1908. And yet, in spite of this heavy reduction in values, the total worth of the product of our mines for 1908 was only two and a half million dollars less than that of the banner year of 1907.

The production of coal and coke has more than doubled itself in the past ten years, being in 1898 only of the value of \$3,582,595, whereas in 1908 it was worth \$7,356,866.

The remarkable progress of the mining industry, and the encouraging manner in which capital is now pouring in to develop our mineral resources, is directly due to the prudent policy followed by Premier McBride of refraining from the constant tinkering with mining laws which had been one of the gravest mistakes which the various governments which preceded him had made. In the old days before 1903 one piece of legislation with regard to mining had hardly become law, when it was rendered null and void by the passage of some other statute or set of amendments. Since, moreover, both the original law, the new statute and the set of amendments were almost always the work of persons who did not know the difference between a cyanide plant and an incubator, it may be well imagined how excessively ignorant, as well as contradictory, most of such legislation was. Naturally enough, capital refused to come into a country which had a new fashion in mining laws every session, and this state of affairs endured until Mr. McBride and his business government came upon the scene. Since then, the mining laws have been equitably administered, and only varied in such few details as were admittedly best in the interest of the industry. It is safe to say that among the many evidences which British Columbia presents of the able administration of Mr. McBride and his colleagues, no monument stands higher than the satisfactory condition of the mining industry.

#### **LANDS, TIMBER AND IRRIGATION**

With the possible exception of finance, there has been no department under the administration of the McBride Gov-