

Nest district, East Kootenay, has now reached an aggregate of about 2,000,000 tons. Commencing in 1898, when the output was only 8,986 tons, the railroad having only been completed to the Coal Creek mines in August of that year, there was a substantial increase each succeeding year until the total for 1902 of 661,118 tons was reached. The output of 1902 was seriously interfered with by an explosion which wrecked two of the most productive mines at the Coal Creek colliery, and labour troubles stopped all production during two months of 1903. These setbacks notwithstanding, much progress has been made, until today the combined producing capacity of the three collieries—Coal Creek, Michel, and Morrissey—is about 4,000 tons per diem, with development work proceeding that will provide facilities for adding to the daily production whenever there shall be a demand for it. At Coal Creek the company is working six mines on four separate seams of coal; at Michel, eight mines on as many seams, and at Morrissey, five mines, each on a distinct seam. The larger seams are generally soft coal; some of the smaller are hard. Together the collieries produce superior steam, coking, blacksmith and domestic coal, the numerous seams between them affording a variety of coals all of generally excellent quality. The mines have been opened and the collieries equipped with plant and machinery on a scale looking to a large and increasing output. All the difficulties attendant upon bringing the collieries to a stage of production far beyond the present requirements of the home market have been overcome and the chief problem now to be solved is that of securing an adequate and thoroughly dependable market for the comparatively large production of these collieries. The outlook is more promising with direct railway communication established between the Morrissey colliery and the transcontinental line of the Great Northern Railway at Jennings, Montana, but the situation is not so satisfactory as regards the Coal Creek and Michel collieries, which are as yet without communication with the Montana market by means of a railroad under one control only. This obstacle will be overcome eventually, when the Crow's Nest Southern Railway shall have been completed *via* Fernie to Michel, but meanwhile these two collieries will be at a disadvantage as compared with the Morrissey mines.

It has been customary to make an outcry against encouraging the export of coal and coke from the Crow's Nest collieries, but now that they are equal to producing a larger quantity than the home market can possibly take, the alternative of restricting production is to secure a market south of the international boundary. Nearly half the 2,000,000 tons mentioned above as the total output of coal to date has been made into coke. The Crow's Nest Pass Coal Company now has 1,128 coke ovens—984 completed and in use and 144 in course of completion. With all these in operation it will be possible to produce 1,400 to 1,500 tons of coke a day. The six smelters—Nelson, Trail, Northport, Grand Forks, Greenwood and Boundary Falls—treating Kootenay and Boundary ores together do not require much more than half that quantity, and there

is the prospect of the largest user of coke (the Granby Company's smelter at Grand Forks, with its six furnaces) having its own independent supply by the close of the current year. It should be evident that the chief hope of any considerable further development of the immense coal resources of the south-eastern portion of the Province lies in the opening up of dependable markets across the line for large quantities of coal and coke.

In this connection a correspondent asks whether under the circumstances it would not be well to look closely into the situation as regards coal lands still unalienated? Apart from the advanced position reached by the Crow's Nest Pass Coal Company in regard to development and equipment of its collieries and the transportation facilities it now has to enable it to market its products, there is the fact that already so many coal enterprises have been launched that few men with capital are inclined to put money into more similar ventures in southeast Kootenay or southwest Alberta. The Canadian Pacific Railway Company has for some time past had men at work opening up coal mines in the Crow's Nest Region: the Canadian-American Company has been operating a colliery at Frank for several years; the West Canadian Collieries Company has lately consolidated several groups of coal lands, two at least of which have been shipping coal; the International Company is opening up mines and erecting coke ovens, primarily to supply the Granby Company's requirements; the North-West Coal & Coke Company lately announced that it had secured \$1,500,000 of English money for the purpose of developing its coal holdings; and other ventures have been floated. It would appear that the supply of coal and coke bids fair to greatly exceed the demand for some time to come, and if this be so where is the advantage to the Province in encouraging speculation in coal lands with no reasonable prospect of their being made productive for years. All through some of the mining sections of the Province there are mineral lands lying unworked, in most cases held by men who either have no money or no inclination to work them themselves or to make anything like reasonable terms with others disposed to do so. Is it not likely that a similar situation will follow the turning over to men without means or to speculators large areas of the East Kootenay coal lands? This view of the question is certainly worthy of careful consideration.

The Seventh Annual Report of the Crow's Nest Pass Coal Company adds another to the series of remarkable reports which serve to show the progress of the mining industry in British Columbia. The business done by the Crow's Nest Pass Coal Company is particularly gratifying for the reason that it is an indication of prosperity throughout the metalliferous mining industry. During the year 1903, in spite of a complete suspension of operations from February 11 to April 1, and partial suspensions later, the company produced 661,118 tons of coal. Of this amount 279,334 tons were sent to the coke ovens, producing 167,989 tons of coke, while 381,784 tons were otherwise disposed of as