force production in 1904 and 1905 will only result in increased competition and diminishing profits.

In British Columbia the year has been the most prosperous on record. The Coast mines, in the agregate, are still the largest producers, having attained an output of 1,200,000 tons. At the end of the year conditions were very much more favourable than at the beginning. The somewhat pessimistic views expressed as to the effect of fuel oil upon the coal trade have not been realized and it looks as if the industries of the Pacific Coast are on the threshold of a development which will surpass all expectations. At the present time the demand for coal is far greater than the supply, and the Western Fuel Company which purchased the mines of the New Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company have realized handsome profits in the first year.

The greatest increase, however, stands to the credit of the Crows Nest Pass Coal Company, which has an output ot coal for the year of 661,118 tons, an increase over the previous year of 219,882 tons, or 50 per cent. But for the unfortunate srike, which closed their mines for two months, the output would have been about seven hundred and fifty thousand tons. It is satisfactory to know that the output of coke shows an increase of 39 per cent, having reached the respectable figure of 167,734 tons. There are now in operation nearly 1,000 ovens, which, with those under construction, will raise the total number to 1,200, having a capacity of nearly 2,000 tons of coke per day; there is no reason why British Columbia smelters should have to complain about lack of fuel supply especially as the tonnage will be largely increased during the coming year. A reasonable estimate for 1904 will be one million tons of coal and two hundred and fifty thousand tons of coke.

The most striking feature of the coal trade in British Columbia and the adjoining areas in Alberta is the large number of Companies which have commenced operations during 1903 and the still larger number which are being organized for the present year. The most extensive of these consist of a series of five mining properties consolidated under the control of a French Syndicate of which Mr. J. Fleutot is the managing director. This group is situated from 10 to 15 miles east of the Crows Nest summit in the neighbourhood of Blairmore. At present the output is 600 tons daily, the whole of which is taken by the C.P.R. for steam purposes. The International Coal and Coke Co., is opening up a mine three miles west of Blairmore, from which they purpose supplying the fuel required for the Granby Smelter. In addition the C.P.R. have commenced to operate a coal property on the north branch of Michel Creek and three companies are being formed to develope the enormous areas on the Elk River, where the extension of the Fernie seams has been discovered. It is altogether likely that by the end of the present year the output of coal in this district will be doubled as there is an unlimited market both in British Columbia, the Territories, and over the line in Montana, there is no reason why for some years to come handsome profits should not be realized and satisfactory dividends earned.

It is also a matter of interest to note that extensive deposits have been discovered by the C.P.R. in the Cascade Mountains near to Banff and development is proceeding at a great pace as in view of the rapidly diminishing output from the Canmore and Anthracite mines a supply of steam coal is a matter of great importance. The same reason will lead in the near future to the building of a branch line from Spence's Bridge to Nicola, where there are extensive deposits of good steam coal. The Dominion Government subsidized this at its last session and it will undoubtedly be constructed during the present year. This will, for the first time, give a local coal supply to the extensive district lying between Banff and the coast.

This brief review would not be complete without reference to the terrible catastrophe which occurred at Frank, in April last, when a mountain slide containing, according to the best authorities, not less than one hundred million tons, crashed into the valley beneath—covering four square miles to an average depth of thirty feet, destroying two miles of railway, with all the mine buildings, plant and machinery of the Canadian American Coal and Coke Company and sacrificing over eighty lives. The opinion of experts, who examined the location of the mine subsequently, attributed the catastrophe mainly to the fact of the mining operations in loosening the side of the mountain, and Messrs. McConnell and Brock the Government geologists, who reported specially on the matter, confirmed this view. A very ill advised attempt to continue operations by the company was made and ultimately abandoned in December. In view of the general opinion that the western peak of the mountain, which is deeply fissured, will yet fall and that the spring thaw will be sure to bring it down, undoubtedly the wise course was to abandon operations, which should never have been permitted after the catastrophe in March last.

Altogether the year's work in "black diamonds" has been of a most progressive and profitable character and the prospects for the future are bright. There is probably no Canadian industry which offers better inducements or which rests upon a sounder basis.

Crown Land Grants in Nova Scotia.

The history of the land grants in Canada leads to the regret that the mining engineer had not been evolved at an earlier date. While there have always been bold miners who dared, and did, the utmost the science of mining allowed, before the beginning of the last century, there were few if any who were competent in matters mineral.

Had the early claimants of this continent founded a continuity of policy, and had their descendants been able to maintain it, then we might have seen in the descended representative of an illustrious grandee a monopoly of its minerals far surpassing the steel, and all other combines united.

In the case of Nova Scotia, however, the general grants of the region, known as Acadia, came to an end with the capture of Annapolis in 1710. The titles granted by the French and the English Governments previous to that date being ignored except on certain conditions of possession and allegiance. The titles of the French settlers, which do not appear to have included minerals, were finally forfeited in 1755. The English Government proposed to settle the province with settlers from England; but the pressure of continental wars postponed consideration of the project.

The province being administered by parties favoring the New England Colonies the best lands of the province were peopled from that source. Numerous townships were laid off and gradually settled. From 1731 to 1763 the royal metals, precious stones, and lapis lazuli were reserved. After that date the reservations were increased by coal, lead, and copper, down to 1808. Some undiscovered system, or want of system, governed all these grants, granting or receiving certain minerals apparently at the whim of some irresponsible official. From 1808 to 1827 iron ore was added to the list of reservations.

In 1827 the Government of England granted to the Duke of York, all ungranted mines and minerals in the province. He tranferred his grant to the General Mining Association of London, who devoted their attention exclusively to the mining of coal. This grant effectually damped all interest in matters mining. Finally after much public agitation the company surrendered their monopoly, retaining only several tracts of coal land. After wresting this valuable franchise from the company, the government having ownership of the minerals under large tracts of land, might have made provision for leasing them, etc.