

SOUTHEAST KOOTENAY DISTRICT.

FORT STEELE MINING DIVISION.

GOLD COMMISSIONER J. F. Armstrong reported as follows on the progress of mining in the Fort Steele mining division for the year 1905:

"The following table shows approximately the number of mineral claims held during each year since 1899:—

	Crown-granted Claims.	Certificates of Work.	New Locations.
1899	37	718	729
1900	71	704	470
1901	104	642	455
1902	117	451	253
1903	142	335	200
1904	167	260	169
1905	189	193	181

"The assessment work done on mineral claims shows a continual decrease, but for the first time in eight years the number of new locations is larger than in the previous year.

Lode Mining.

"The shipping mines have been the St. Eugene, the Sullivan group and the North Star group. The St. Eugene mine was shipping during the whole year, with the exception of a couple of months, during which it was closed on account of damage done to the machinery by a fire. The Sullivan group has been shipping for six months and is smelting its product at Marysville, where the company has erected a smelter which is expected soon to be in a position to treat the ore of other mines in the St. Mary's district. The North Star ceased shipping early in the year, but development has been continued on a neighbouring claim, the Stemwinder, where good ore has been struck at a depth of a thousand feet or more below the level of the North Star workings, with the best of indications.

"The Aurora group, on the west side of Moyie Lake, has been developing, and a lead has been struck which is considered to be a continuation of the St. Eugene lead on the east side of the lake. It is expected that some shipping will be done during 1906.

"A syndicate has secured rights to prospect under Moyie Lake, between the St. Eugene and Aurora groups, with the object of locating the lead on which these two groups are working. They propose commencing work early in 1906.

"Some development work has been done on claims on White Fish and Alki Creeks. Ore from these localities could be transported to the smelter at Marysville, at rates which would not be prohibitive.

"The situation at the end of the year shows a large increase in shipments. Development work on a large scale would be justified on many properties, even with the present means of transportation. Capital is wanted everywhere, and better means of transportation are necessary in some sections.

Placer Mining.

On Wild Horse Creek, the usual output has been made by Chinamen. One white company is installing

a plant on a lease and work is being continued during the winter, with the expectation of being ready for sluicing as soon as the frost leaves the ground.

"On Perry Creek, one hydraulic company has been working all summer, with a large plant, the leases covering two and a half miles of the creek bed and the adjoining benches. The output has been satisfactory. The company operating on the same creek with a steam shovel has not done any work during the year. A mining lease below the hydraulic company is being worked by sinking and drifting below the bed of the creek; the work is being carried on on a small scale, but with remunerative results.

"The company operating on Bull River has not done any work during the past summer.

Coal Mining.

"The provincial mineralogist will probably report on the work done by the Crow's Nest Pass Coal Co. I cannot do so, as no returns are made through my office.

"The Imperial Coal Co. holds 89 coal licences on Fording River. During the year trails have been built, surveys made and prospecting has been carried on. Several valuable seams of coal have been uncovered.

"A syndicate which has been holding 45 coal licences on Elk River, north of and adjoining Block 4,588, having discovered coal thereon, has applied for coal leases over 41 of the claims. During this year it has had its claims surveyed.

"The Elk River Coal and Oil Co. has renewed 22 coal licences, having prospected these, built trails and surveyed certain of the claims. It has applied for 16 additional licences.

"The Western Coal and Oil Co., which held petroleum claims on the west side of Elk River, near Morrissey and Fernie, has allowed them to lapse. The lands have since been staked in other names.

"A syndicate holding 16 coal licences at the northern end of Block 4,593 has successfully prospected its claims and having had them surveyed, obtained coal leases of the same ground.

"Of the coal and petroleum licences issued over land in Block 4,593, 23 have been renewed through my office, proof of prospecting having been filed. Nineteen of these claims have been surveyed. The surveys show many cases of overlapping.

"During the year there have been published in the British Columbia Gazette notices of application for 219 coal and petroleum licences over ground in South-east Kootenay, and 64 applications have been filed in my office."

Office statistics for the year include the following: Mineral and placer claims, 186; certificates of work, 193; certificates of improvement, 29; conveyances, 42; free miners' certificates, 395; Crown grants issued, 22; coal and oil licence applications, renewals and leases, 267. The revenue received from free miners' certificates was \$2,246.25, and general mining receipts, \$3,703.25; total, \$5,949.50.