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The Canadian Society of Civil Engineers.

INCORPORATED 1887.

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INITIAL PROCEEDINGS IN OPENING UP A COAL MINE

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To be read at a meeting of the Mining Section, January 8th, 1914.

While but little that is new to members of the society may appear in this paper, the writer's excuse for inflicting it upon the readers of the transactions is that a new generation, which is growing up, may be interested to know of the initial proceedings in opening what is destined to become in the near future one of the largest producing coal centres on the continent.

Before proceeding with the description of the initial work of opening and developing a coal basin it may be well to refer briefly to the field of which the Lingan Basin forms an important part, and to the early operations carried on therein.

The coal fields of Cape Breton, situated on the northeast coast of the island, are largely submarine, and are divided into four basins known locally as the Morien, Glace Bay, Lingan, and Sydney Mines basin, each of these being separated from its neighbor on the land areas by a well-defined anticline. Whether all these basins join into one great one far out at sea, or end as separate individual basins, must be left for future workers to determine, as it is not the purpose of this paper to enter into a discussion on that point. Historical records show that the value of these coal beds was known and some coal exported during the French occupation in the first decades of the eighteenth century.

The earliest mining operations were carried on by driving tunnels into the seams where exposed in the cliffs along the sea coast, or in gullies where the age-long action of streams had cut through the various strata, leaving them exposed on either side. Coal extracted at this time was generally loaded on scows which were towed out to waiting vessels anchored off shore and then transferred to the vessel's hold. In the early sixties of the past century a number of small companies were formed and operations commenced at a number of different points.

The system pursued by the small individual operators of these mines was to select a point as near the sea coast as practicable. There a mine