

Cape Breton Coal Interests.

Cape Breton has a population of 84,000 nearly double that of British Columbia. Its area is 4,375 sq. miles or twice that of Prince Edward Island. In form it may be said to consist of a small trunk and to long extremities, separated from one another by the waters of the Bras d'Or Lake. Of these extremities the southern is by far the most important. It lies south of a line drawn parallel to the northern shore of the Island of Boularderie extending westward through North Mountain to the Strait of Canseau. Its population is 50,000, and a line of railway running through its centre to Sydney with a 10 mile branch to North Sydney would very nearly be within 10 miles of them all.

It contains the only bed of coal on the Atlantic seaboard of both Americas. The land area of this bed of coal is 2,00 sq. miles and the number of available tons in the Submarine areas alone are set down in the Nova Scotia report as 2,000,000,000 tons. In developing this inexhaustible supply Capitalists have expended \$10,000,000 of money. Nearly all the seams lie at easy angles, yield little water, and owing to the generally firm character of the roof they can be mined with unusual cheapness and safety. So strongly marked is the impermeable nature of the strata that at a moderate depth the submarine workings are perfectly dry" ("Gilpin's report 1886.) Last year the total output of these mines was 550,178 tons of coal, yielding a royalty to the Provincial Treasury of Nova Scotia of over \$40,000.

It is of the utmost importance to Nova Scotia and to the Dominion that this mine of wealth be tapped by the shortest, easiest, and most practical line of Railway. It is of the utmost importance to Cape Breton itself, because now its mines lie idle in winter while navigation is closed. A good road to the Strait of Canseau and a commodious ferry over it would go far to overcome the closing of navigation. At present the Intercolonial carries Pictou and Spring Hill coals to Montreal at the rate of three-tenths of a cent per