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## Mining Under the Sea.

The Most Extensive Mining Operations in the World Carried on By Canadian Company.

(By F. W. GRAY, Mem. I. Min. Eng.)  
It is a singular circumstance that on the whole Atlantic coast-line of the American Continent there are only two places at which coal and iron-ore deposits are found at tide-water; namely, in Nova Scotia and in Newfoundland. In both instances the presence of the coal seams and iron-ore deposits was revealed by outcroppings on land. The amount of coal and iron-ore underlying the land area is, in both instances, relatively small and unimportant when compared with the undersea deposits.

There can be little doubt that large beds of coal, and possibly iron-ore, are concealed by the waters of the sea in such a manner that their presence can be only surmised, and they are, of course, inaccessible to mining. In one or two instances the erosion by the sea has been so extensive that the outcroppings of the coal seams and the iron-ore seams are only sufficient in area to indicate the presence of these minerals in greater quantity under the sea.

The most valuable and important undersea coal deposit in Nova Scotia lies off the shore of Cape Breton Island, extending for about 20 miles on either side of Sydney Harbor, and underlying the waters forming the entrance to this splendid roadstead.

The coal seams in the Sydney field extend inland for a comparatively short distance, running inland at no point further removed than seven miles from the sea-shore, but their extension under the sea is unknown. The workings of a number of the collieries have proceeded under the bed of the ocean for varying distances, up to the maximum of 2 1/4 miles from highwater mark. How much further the coal seams extend is not known, but the probabilities are that they continue uninterrupted to a distance beyond the limit of man's ability to carry air for ventilation and for the cutting and transportation of coal. What this limit is no person can determine.

When the mining of coal under the sea was first undertaken in Cape Breton about 50 years ago, the vision of the pioneers of that day did not carry beyond the possibility of mining coal to a distance under the sea of one mile from the opening at the shore. To-day coal is being mined off the Coast of England almost four miles from land, and it is thought that coal can be mined off Cape Breton Island to a distance of about five miles from shore. It may even be mined at much greater distances from shore should the progress of the arts and the need for coal develop as rapidly in the next one hundred years as they did in the century that has gone by since coal was first mined on a large scale in Cape Breton.

The pioneer of coal mining in Nova Scotia was the General Mining Association of London, England. This Company had a monopoly of the minerals in Nova Scotia, and between the years 1825 and 1857 expended £300,000 in developing the mining of coal in that province, a very considerable investment at that time. In 1857 this monopoly was broken, the ownership of the coal seams being vested in the Government of Nova Scotia, and a number of smaller, independent, coal mining companies were founded.

The General Mining Association, by arrangement, was allowed to select coal areas for its operations and retained, under a royalty arrangement, coal areas at Sydney Mines, Glace Bay, Springhill, and Stellarton. The General Mining Association gradually parted with its coal properties to other companies, but independent coal mining did not prove successful in Nova Scotia.

The need for consolidation led, in 1893, to the formation of the Dominion Coal Company, which was an amalgamation of a number of smaller companies in the Sydney coalfield, with which was amalgamated also a large part of the General Mining Association's holdings. Later the remainder of the General Coal Mining Association's holdings in the Sydney district were acquired by the Nova Scotia Steel and Coal Company, which brought under the control of these two companies virtually all the submarine coal in the Sydney coalfield.

With the partial exhaustion of the coal lying under the land in the course of years, the mining of coal from under the sea became more and more extended, with the result that the lease boundaries of the two companies commenced to conflict and became a grave hindrance to the further progress of large scale mining in the future. The two companies were very much in each other's way, and the difficulty was eventually solved by the consolidation of interests.

In the meantime, the Dominion Coal Company had acquired the Springhill area and the Nova Scotia Steel and Coal Company had acquired the Acadia area at Stellarton, both on the mainland of Nova Scotia, so that when the British Empire Steel Corporation was formed there came back again under one management

the four most important coal areas in Nova Scotia, which were originally selected by the mining engineers of the General Mining Association in 1857.

The consolidation of the British Empire Steel Corporation took in not only the coal areas above mentioned, and notably the great submarine field of Sydney harbor, but acquired also the sole ownership of the iron-ore deposits lying off the shore of Bell Island, in Conception Bay, Newfoundland, and thereby brought under the control of one Canadian company undersea mining operations of greater combined magnitude than any similar operations in the world.

The iron-ore deposit at Wabana, Newfoundland, is unique. It has no geological counterpart anywhere. The iron-ore is found in seams that are as even in thickness and as regular in inclination as a normal coal deposit. Like the Sydney coalfield, the out-cropping of the iron-ore seams on Bell Island is of small extent when compared with the enormous area of the ore seams under the sea. The extremity of the main tunnel, from which the ore is mined in this district, is over two miles from the shore and at this point the workings are in an ore seam varying in thickness from 15 to 30 feet.

The ore is shot down by explosives, and is then loaded into cars by mechanical contrivances. The height of the seam permits the use of loading machines of greater size and to a larger extent than coal mines; and there are few places underground, and certainly no other places situated at such a distance under the sea, where mechanical shovels of the type used in the Wabana mines are to be found.

The extent of the iron-ore deposits under the sea at Wabana, like the coal deposits at Sydney, are not known, but they are believed to continue at least as far as it will be possible to mine the ore.

At the present time the mines of the British Empire Steel Corporation are producing from under the sea 3,500,000 tons of coal and 1,000,000 tons of iron-ore annually, and there is every probability that these tonnages will be very largely increased in the years that are to come.

The consolidation under one management of the coal areas in the Sydney coalfield and the iron-ore areas at Wabana was the compelling reason for the formation of the British Em-



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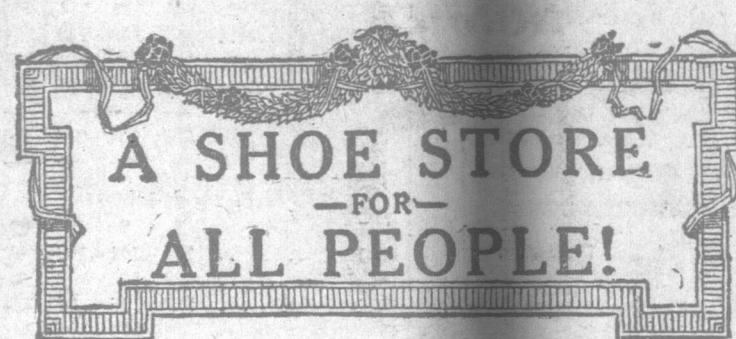
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THE SHOE MEN

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pire Steel Corporation, and it has proved, and will increasingly prove as the years go by, to have been a proceeding as it was an inevitable one.

At the present time three large undersea collieries are projected in the Sydney coalfield, one of which is well advanced towards completion. Each of these collieries will win and render for mining large tracts of coal, owned jointly by the consolidated companies. Unity of interest has made it possible to mine these areas with a minimum of waste of natural resources and greater protection for posterity than would have been otherwise possible.

The development and equipment intended to win submarine coal is extremely expensive. Openings at the shore must be very large in order to carry the air required for ventilation and pumping must be unusually powerful; similarly the machinery for hauling coal over long distances and the equipment for the generation and conveyance of power underground must be carried out on a much larger scale than is necessary in a land colliery. One of the new collieries before mentioned will cost in the vicinity of \$2,500,000 before completion. Such an expenditure could not be justified except it made possible the winning of large quantities of coal over a long period of time; and, in this particular instance, the sum named is expected to render available for mining approximately 1,000,000 tons of coal over a period of 120 years to come.

This colliery is being equipped with electrical appliances for ventilation and pumping, for the haulage of coal, the transportation of men to and from their work at the coal-face, and for the cutting and removal of coal from the seam.

It is reasonable to expect, as previously suggested, that new inventions will come to the assistance of the coal miner during such a long period of time as 120 years to come, and it would be an interesting occupation

to speculate on what the future may hold in this regard.

It is quite evident, however, that submarine deposits, no matter how valuable and how lasting they are, can only be developed by consolidation of interests and by the unity and continuity of management, and the financial resources that competing companies could not attain to.

The attempt to mine coal and iron-ore in the Sydney coalfield and in Newfoundland by individual companies brought about a physical condition which insistently called for a consolidation of management. The ex-

perience of the successors of the General Mining Association in Nova Scotia has pointed out, with irrefragable logic, the weakness of unconsolidated and scattered interests in connection with the financial side of mining. This rarely has been a case where amputation of interests was so completely demanded by the circumstances, or where it has been, and is, so thoroughly justified by the results.

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