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B. T. A. BELL, Editor and Proprietor.  
Secretary, Canadian Mining Institute, etc.

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## The Prosperity of Cape Breton.

Coal is still King in Cape Breton Island. For many years he has lorded it in solitary grandeur. Now, however, his sway is to be shared in by another. It would perhaps be incorrect to say that a rival to the crown has put in an appearance. The claims of coal to the Kingship are too solid and well-founded to be upset or challenged. Rather is it true that the King is taking unto himself a Consort in the person of Iron to share his throne. The suitability of the match cannot be disputed, and the advantages that must accrue from the alliance not only to the contracting parties, but also to the kingdom over which they will jointly reign, can hardly be over-estimated. The bride comes richly dowered, while the bridegroom is a man of substance and beyond question an eligible parti. Much may be hoped from this happy union and we can in imagination picture a fine crop of thriving infant industries as the natural result thereof.

The recent meeting of the American Institute of Mining Engineers at Sydney, afforded us a very agreeable and ample opportunity for testing the truth of all that has been said and written during the past year or so concerning the great and rapid developments that have been taking place in this, the most eastern point of the Dominion. We have been, we have seen, and we have come away convinced. The work that is now being done on the shores of Sydney Harbor and at the neighboring collieries can only be described as marvellous. The investing of so many millions of Canadian money—to say nothing of what our American friends are putting up—has naturally caused the eyes of business men throughout the Dominion to be turned expectantly in an easterly direction, and Cape Breton has for a year past been attracting more attention than any other part of the Dominion, British Columbia or the Klondyke not excepted. We are now, after what we witnessed in August, in a position to assert that this keen interest is fully justified and Canada may well be eager to watch the growth of an industry which must have such far-reaching effects on the commercial life of the country. The transformation of Sydney from a quiet and rather humdrum village into a busy city teeming with possibilities, has been rapidly accomplished. Work upon the blast furnaces, coke ovens, steel mills, etc., of the Dominion Iron and Steel Company, was commenced in July last year. Taking into account geographical and climatic disadvantages—the distances from bases of supply, the utter inadequacy of local transportation facilities by rail, and the long winter during which outside operations could be carried on only under serious drawbacks, the progress that has been accomplished is simply phenomenal and speaks volumes for the energy, determination and resource of the men who have had the direction of the work.

By the 15th of October, or fifteen months from the striking of the first blow, it is confidently expected that one of the blast furnaces will be in operation and turning out pig metal. We may be astray but we doubt if the history of the iron industry the world over can show anything to beat this for rapidity in construction. Starting the first furnace in October with a daily capacity of 250 tons, other three furnaces will follow at intervals of a few months apart until a daily production of 1,000 tons of pig iron is reached, and when this point is touched it is more than likely that an extension of the plant will have been decided upon. The work of constructing the blast furnaces is being done by the Riter-Conly Manufacturing Company of Pittsburg. The coke ovens, under construction by the United Gas & Coke Co., also of Pittsburg, are keeping time with the blast furnaces. They follow on the lines of the coke ovens built at Everett, Mass., coke being the staple product, while all other constituent properties in the coal are treated as by-products. The open-hearth buildings and blooming mills, altho' not at so advanced a stage of progress, are also well under way. For two or three months past ore has been coming along in large steamer loads from Wabana, Newfoundland, and a large pile of many thousands of tons is already in stock on the works. The number of men employed is not now so large as in the spring and summer. The pick and shovel work has to a great extent been finished and skilled laborers are now mostly in evidence.

Wonderful indeed, it is to see a district comprising some 500 acres which barely a year ago was farming and waste land, covered with substantial buildings, gigantic iron structures and towering chimneys.

And yet this is only a part of what we were privileged to see in Cape Breton. The coal business has to a certain extent been overshadowed by the rapid growth of a new industry alongside of it, and yet an immense amount of development is being accomplished at the mines of the Dominion Coal Company. The present year has seen a tremendous impetus given to the industries that are dependant upon coal. And the strain would make it appear as if the coal fields of Great Britain had not only reached their limit of productiveness, but perhaps touched a point from which a slow but gradual decrease may be looked for, English coal-owners have in many cases found successful rivals in American competition in European markets where hitherto they have had undisputed sway.

Under these circumstances the vast deposits of coal in Cape Breton—so far exploited to but a comparatively slight extent—gain additional value. No coal regions on this side of the Atlantic Ocean are so conveniently situated on the sea-board for easy shipment as are these, and it may be asked why are not the fortunate proprietors