

[Page 35 - The Steel Boom Comes to Sydney, 1899](#)

ISSUE : [Issue 39](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1985/6/1

Left, a view of Dominion Iron & Steel Co. workers at the iron ore deposit at Bell Island, Newfoundland. The ease (and thus cheapness) of surface extraction can be seen, when compared with underground mining. Right, workers who quarried limestone at Marble Mountain for use in the steelmaking process. to put himself on record regarding this "objectionable" clause. "He did not think he wanted to have it said abroad that the Nova Scotia Legislature would grant almost anything." February, 1899, Island Reporter (quoted in Industrial Advocate): The people of the county (Cape Breton County) are determined that everything which possibly lays in their power and within the sphere of their influence ought to be attempted to bring to a head the location of the iron industry as a fixture in our midst. The people of this county are most anxious for the settlement within our borders of this great industry and all its accompaniments of increased labour, wide business prosperity, and general commercial expansion, and it is part, of wisdom to take time by the forelock in this patriotic matter.... Cape Breton is the natural hunting ground today for the corporation which desires to invest its capital with sure and large returns from iron developments. Cape Breton's advantages ... have so to speak been tested in a furnace several times heated.... We cannot therefore doubt, whether the time that elapses be long or short, that this county will become the Birmingham and Glasgow of Canada as today it is the Newcastle and Cardiff of the Dominion.... Cape Breton has no enemy except Time itself. The great iron enterprise and commercial industrial life can only be delayed in its coming, its coming can never be prevented. Let every Cape Bretonian lay that fact to heart and it must have its legitimate fruit in a more exalted faith in our position, a more devoted zeal towards united action all along the line, and the loosening of that critical and pessimistic spirit which doth so easily beset us. If capital once makes up its mind to come to this county it will come and that without undue delay and to stay. March, 1899: With the report that Whitney had bought Belle Isle, Newfoundland, iron ore, Industrial Advocate added that "rival towns" in Cape Breton "with creditable zeal, endeavoured to induce promoters of the enterprise to favour their particular locality.... Bonuses and exemptions have been freely offered." Newfoundland was suggested but due to "primitive development of local fuel supplies... it is quite certain... that one of our Cape Breton ports will be chosen." The extent to which the people of Sydney were willing to go, to get the steel plant in their town is indicated by a passage from Dr. A. S. Kendall's speech for re-election in October, 1900: "... We saved the people of the town of Sydney from themselves. In our desperately poor condition, 3 years ago, a meeting was held in Sydney in which there was not a dissenting voice, Warren Gordon's New Book Cape Breton Island of Islands over 80 Full Colour Photographs, with Selected Verses from Cape Breton Songs Pick up your copy at our studio, or we'll mail to you or your friends away. Price \$19.95 (plus \$1.50 mailing & handling) GORDON PHOTOGRAPHIC LTD. 367 Charlotte St., Sydney, N. S. BIP IEI OF CAPE BRETON SCENES (35)