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ISSUE : [Issue 39](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1985/6/1

A society of mining engineers visits the new steel plant. whose vast mineral riches are commanding the attention of the capitalists of the world." Sydney was portrayed not only as the site of Canada's greatest industrial development, but as the reasonable centre of the world of trade. The Gripsack published a table showing Sydney, Pittsburgh, and Birmingham, Alabama's distances from various markets. In all cases, Sydney proved closest. "It should be noted that the distances from Pittsburgh and Birmingham are partly by railway, while from Sydney they are by deep water all the way. It is unnecessary to say that deep water transportation is much cheaper than railway transportation." C. W. Vernon published in his Cape Breton, Canada a map depicting Sydney as a world centre. "It will be seen," he wrote, "that Cape Breton ports are nearer to Europe than any others on the Atlantic seaboard of America.... But curiously enough... they are also nearer to the ports of the South American continent." He went on to offer his prophesy: "The location and characteristics of Cape Breton are indeed very similar in many respects to those of Great Britain.... The one is possibly at the very zenith of her commercial and maritime supremacy. The other but sees in dim outline the imperial destiny that nature and Providence have in reserve for her." Meanwhile, Sydney was trying to cope with the reality of the boom. The Baddeck Telephone published letters home from Victoria County people: The town is besieged by people looking for board and lodging or a house to let. Any kind of a shack will rent for 12 or 15 dollars per month, while houses of the better class cannot be had. So great is the volume of freight arriving at the sheds in Sydney, that it takes four days before you can get your stuff after it arrives.... The mild weather favours building operations, and buildings are going up right and left. If ice should prevent vessels arriving during the next month, there will be a lumber famine. You had better advise your farming friends to stir up the hens, for eggs are retailing at 25 cents per dozen.... Anyone familiar with old Sydney and visiting it today, will scarcely recognize it. It appears as if some booming Western town had been dropped bodily on the site of Sydney, not covering it entirely, but leaving some of the old town protruding through. In one way the new regime has had a depressing effect on the older citizens. Once the habitue of the street knew every other citizen, and nodded a friendly recognition or stopped for a chat. Now he has to elbow his way through a crowd of strange faces, with a feeling that he is a stranger in the haunts of his youth. And another wrote his "first impressions of the Iron Age": In the first place there are lots of people going on, and the procession comprises directors of banks, merchants, speculators, house-hunters, shoals of sharks, armies of mechanics, gangs of labourers • speaking the gibberish of many lands • and the usual camp following of tramps and bums. The banks have monopolized the corners, and stand like Wisdom of old, calling to the multitudes to cease the pursuit of vanity and deposit their surplusage at 3%. But in that transformed square mile across the creek, where capital is being dumped by the cart load, there is the exposition of modern



enterprise that makes the eyes of rustics like myself stick out till you could hang your hat on them. Five (ac? tually 4) great furnaces • two of them completed • are steadily rising from the blueberry turf.... A train of 150 cars would be necessary to carry away the product of one day's operations.... Will this last? I have no doubt it will, and for this reason: there seems to be an entire absence of that splurge and sputter, marking capital wasted, in a new and untried adventure. The whole thing moves on as if directed by a staff of (45)