

NICKEL GOES TO FOE, BUT INQUIRY GOES ON

Can It be Economically Refined in Ontario?

PAPERS TO COME DOWN

**Mr. Rowell's Motion for Information
is Adopted—Powerful Place of On-
tario in Supplying Nickel for the
World—Premier's Assurances.**

The major portion of the proceedings at the Legislature yesterday was taken up with a discussion of the nickel question, which arose on the motion for a return by the leader of the Opposition. Mr. Rowell, in the course of his speech, wished the House to be put in possession of information which would give confidence that none of the nickel produced in Ontario was going to Germany. He also touched on the matter of the complete refining of nickel, and, in reference to the appointment of the Commission, urged that no time be lost in getting to business in order that the report might be available while the House was still in session.

Premier Hearst stated that the information the Government had was regarded as of a confidential character by the present Government at Ottawa, who had been in touch with the British Government and the Admiralty. The assurance was that no nickel was reaching the enemy.

In moving for a return for correspondence passing between the Government of Ontario and the Dominion Government and other communications relative to the use of nickel by his Majesty's enemies in the present war, Mr. Rowell remarked that nickel constituted an essential part of the success of a navy in the necessary equipment of the vessels, and also in connection with the manufacture of projectiles for both the army and navy. As a matter of fact, he presumed it would not be disputed that if one country had control of the nickel supply, or had the use of it both for the purposes of the army and navy, and another country could not secure a nickel supply at all, the latter would be defeated before entering the contest, other conditions being equal.

Ontario Supplies 80 P.C. of Nickel.

The matter was one not only of great economic and industrial importance to the people of Ontario and the Dominion, but the production, mining and manufacture of nickel was of great military significance not only to Canada, but to the Empire as well. Ontario, the French penal colony of New Caledonia, and Norway sustained, so far as he knew, at the present time the nickel supplies of the world suitable for development as a large business and commercial proposition. He thought the statement made by the member for Timiskaming that Ontario produced about 80 per cent. of the nickel supply of the world was in accordance with fact. At a time when we were engaged in a life-and-death struggle we did not want Canadian nickel to go to our enemies, and he hoped that the Prime Minister, either in some statement that he might make or in the papers which might come down as a result of the motion, would put the House in possession of such information

as would give confidence that none of the nickel was going to Germany.

Can They Refine Here?

There was another question which had come up, whether the nickel could not be wholly manufactured in the Province of Ontario, and on that matter, according to the press, the Government is about to appoint a Commission. It seemed to him that the question of the manufacture of nickel or complete refining of nickel into metallic nickel was larger than an industrial proposition. It had Imperial significance as well. They had a considerable nickel supply in this Province, they had it refined in a certain degree, and when it reached this stage it was shipped out of the Province and the refining was completed in the United States. If the United States passed a law prohibiting the export of war materials from the States, or materials which might be used in the manufacture of war materials, they might prohibit the export of nickel. He did not think the American Government was going to do it, but he was using the illustration only to point out the importance of the matter.

Might Keep it From Britain.

If that were so the situation might arise of the nickel company in the United States prohibiting exports to Great Britain. Supposing the British Government or this Government controlled the supply of nickel, they could bring it up to a certain degree of refinement, but they could not produce the refined nickel in this Province so as to make it valuable for the British Admiralty. In order that the nickel supply of this country should be really available at all times for Imperial purposes it appeared it was essential that they should have the refining of that nickel into metallic nickel within the Province of Ontario. If they had not so far produced metallic nickel there were two companies who had the process under way—the Coniagas Company and the De Lora Company.

Expansion of Industry.

When the question first came before the Legislature—about 1890 or 1891—the production of nickel in the Province was on a very small scale, in fact the industry was only beginning to develop. In 1900 the nickel produced in the Province was 3,540 tons, and in 1913 the figures were 24,838 tons; in other words, more than six times as much nickel in 1913 as in 1900. The expansion had kept pace with the increase in naval armaments among the leading nations of the world. He had been told by men engaged in the mining business that conditions were not so dissimilar in the Province of Ontario or in some parts of the Dominion of Canada to those obtaining in New Jersey that the refining could not be carried out here without serious loss and could be carried out at a profit. He thought the Commission should be appointed at once in order that they might have a report while the House was still in session.

No Nickel Going to Foe.

Premier Hearst said he had no objection to the motion going. There was no correspondence between this Government and the British Government and the British Admiralty. That naturally would not come to a Provincial Government.

"The information we have," explained the Premier, "is information of a confidential character by the present Government at Ottawa, who have had the matter in charge, and who have been in touch with the British Government and the British Admiralty. I can only assure my hon. friend in that connection that the information which has been given to me is of the most satisfying character in every respect. It does not seem there is any matter of doubt that no nickel since the commencement of the war has been reaching our enemies.

"The Dominion Government, as I have stated, being the only authority that naturally can get in touch with the Home Government in the matter, is the Government that must take the responsibility. I am not at liberty to go beyond what the Prime Minister stated in the House when the matter was up a few days ago. I can only