

WANT PUBLIC TO OWN THE NICKEL INDUSTRY

Expressions by Members in the Legislature Not Ap- proved by Government— If Admiralty is Satisfied, Why Not Ontario ?

The nickel question was once more fairly well thrashed out in the Legislature yesterday, when Mr. Carter, the member for South Wellington, moved for a return relating to the royalties or taxes paid by the nickel companies, and for other information. The discussion evoked was wide in scope and centred chiefly round whether the nickel companies were contributing enough to the Treasury in the way of taxes, the public ownership of the nickel industry, and the prohibition of the export of nickel during the progress of the war.

Mr. Carter, in support of his motion, which was passed, said that going over the returns up to the year 1912 it could be told that the figures were apparently worked on a 3 per cent. basis, but for the year 1912-13-14 the taxation from the nickel concerns was a stated amount of \$40,000. In 1912 the products represented \$4,700,000, and in 1913 \$5,200,000. If the increase had been taxed an additional \$15,000 would have gone into the Treasury of this Province. The speaker referred to the success of public ownership in reference to the Hydro-electric, and with regard to the nickel matter declared: "My suggestion is that this Province invite the Dominion Government and the Imperial Government to take over this business. I mean entirely take it over—get rid of all the capital, water and everything."

Government Control Difficult.

Hon. Howard Ferguson, Minister of Lands, Forests and Mines, pointed out that many years ago these concerns were given a patent, so that without actual confiscation it was impossible for this Government to control the commercial dealings with the nickel project. He explained that the factor in the taxation was the value of the ore in the ground. It was a very easy matter of calculation in a silver and gold proposition, where they had the entire completion of the refining and marketing of the product, but it had been found utterly impossible to refine nickel in the Province.

Pays Big Share of Tax.

The nickel industry to-day paid 20 per cent. of the total mining tax the Province collected. With regard to taking over the nickel proposition, he would state that not once but twice that suggestion had been made to the Imperial authorities, and for reasons best known to themselves they declined. As to the assurance that none of their nickel was reaching the enemy, he stated the Imperial Government had expressed its satisfaction with the arrangements that had been made, and declared there was no possibility of the nickel reaching the enemy. The Imperial Government having been satisfied, he thought they in this Province should feel amply secure.

Does Ontario Get Proper Return?

Mr. C. M. Bowman (West Bruce) addressed to the House the question: Is this Province getting a proper return in the shape of royalties or taxes from the production of nickel? The International Nickel Company was an American concern, and the stockholders were practically all in the United States. The net income of this company had grown from \$2,629,000 in 1907 to \$6,386,799 in 1913, and in the latter year the profits to the stockholders in round figures were \$4,000,000, and there was an