

URGE BRITISH CONTROL OF ONTARIO NICKEL

Liberals Would Prevent Ship- ment to Enemy Countries

GOVERNMENT OWNERSHIP

Tories Reject Proposal to Acquire Prop- erties of Foreign Corporation in Which Germans Are Said to be Financially Interested.

The Provincial Government last night rejected a proposal to prevent the shipment of Ontario nickel to enemy countries. The decision was reached following a five-hour debate in the Legislature, which arose from the introduction of the following motion by Mr. Sam Carter, Liberal member for South Wellington:

"That in the opinion of this House the production and sale of nickel in this Province should be under Government control; and that negotiations should be at once entered into by the Government of this Province with the Government of the Dominion of Canada and the Government of the United Kingdom to secure united action to acquire the absolute control of the nickel mines and nickel product of the Province of Ontario."

In the course of the debate it was shown that about eighty per cent. of the world's supply of nickel is produced in Ontario, and Mr. Rowell urged that in view of the military value of nickel it was important that the control of the nickel product of Ontario should be retained by British interests.

Germans Financially Interested.

Mr. William Proudfoot, Liberal member for Centre Huron, said he was informed that the Krupps of Germany owned about twenty-five per cent. of the stock of the International Nickel Company of the United States, which at present controls a large portion of the nickel output of Ontario. He added that the International Nickel Company was reported to have had a big contract for the supply of nickel to the Krupps and that the Kaiser was a stockholder in the Krupp concern.

Hon. Mr. Hanna asked Mr. Proudfoot where he got his information regarding the connection of the Krupps with the International Nickel Company. Mr. Proudfoot said it was general information, but he believed it was reliable.

Might Prevent War in Future.

"What it would mean to our Empire if we could get control of the nickel output of Ontario," commented Mr. Sam Carter (South Wellington), after he had pointed out that Northern Ontario, France and Norway were practically the only producers of nickel in the world. Ontario produced about eighty per cent. of the nickel in the world, and if the Government could get control of the industry it might mean the prevention of war in the future. Now was the time for the Province to declare its policy. The Ontario Government should get in touch with the Dominion and Imperial Governments and see what could be done. Also they should take steps to see that nickel was refined in the Province. He was a strong believer in public ownership. The people of Ontario were more than capable of managing their own business, he thought. Under private ownership of the mines at Copper Cliff the condition of some of the workers was wretched. He had visited Copper Cliff and seen the hovels in which

some of the miners were compelled to live on account of the low wages they received. The company's profits were five times greater than the amount paid in wages.

Opposes Public Ownership.

Mr. R. R. Gamey contended that if the Government were to confiscate the properties of the nickel companies it would discourage capitalists who were planning to invest money in Ontario mining districts. He also pointed out that the Government of the Province or the Dominion or the Imperial Government had no process for refining nickel. The International Nickel Company was a "grasping and unscrupulous corporation" in regard to its competitors, but it treated its labor well. They might as well confiscate the gold deposits of the Province as the nickel deposits, in his opinion.

It is Not Confiscation.

The International Nickel Company or any other company or person doing pioneering work should be dealt fairly with, said Mr. J. C. Elliott (West Middlesex), but there was a vast difference between confiscation and expropriation at a fair valuation. Neither the resolution nor the mover of the resolution mentioned confiscation. If Ontario produced eighty per cent. of the world's nickel supply the refining should take place in Ontario.

Mr. Allan Studholme (East Hamilton), referring to the statement of Mr. Gamey to the effect that there was no equipment in Canada for refining nickel, thought Canadians and Britishers were just as able as the citizens of any other country. They had made a success of the Hydro, why could they not make a success of the nickel industry?

Government Control Important.

Mr. Rowell said it seemed to him that the nation which controls the supply of nickel controls the question of naval armament and naval and military efficiency of the future. If there could be in the future some arrangement dealing with the industries of the Empire and the industries of the allies it would be a most valuable asset in any economic arrangement that could be worked out that there should be Government control of the whole output of nickel so far as this Province is concerned. Two and a half million dollars is invested in the Province by the Canadian Copper Company, and, according to the statement of Sir Thomas White, the International Nickel Company had profits for nine months of something like \$9,000,000 or \$10,000,000, which, of course, included the refining as well as mining. "It is of the highest possible importance that the control should be in our hands," said Mr. Rowell, "for whatever the result of this war may be there will be an enormous demand in Germany for nickel for the purpose of re-establishing her armaments."

Now is the Time.

Referring to the argument that while the Nickel Commission was investigating it was inadvisable to proceed along lines such as suggested, Mr. Rowell replied: "The misfortune of that situation is this: that while the Commission is investigating the policy is being settled for us, for we have read the announcement that an arrangement was about to be entered into by the Federal Government whereby the International Nickel Co. would establish a refining plant on the eastern seaboard of Canada. If the policy is being settled by the events as transpiring from month to month, then it is the duty of this House to consider the general lines of our policy." The order in Council passed recently by the Federal Government was an indication that the Government recognized some nickel was going to Germany from Canada or some other source, and that it was the duty of Canada to conserve so far as possible the supply." If difficulties had been looked at the same way they were that afternoon there would have been no progress in the Hydro. They should tackle the nickel question with the same courage and resource as had been manifested in grappling