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News from Ottawa

Another Steel Steal?
(By The Guide Special Correspondent)

Ottawa, March 13.—The formal demand of the iron and steel industries for aid in the way of bounty was made by J. J. Carrick, Conservative member for Thunder Bay and Rainy River, in whose district there are large deposits of iron ore. The proposal which Mr. Carrick had to make to the government was a new one. It was that instead of paying a bounty on the finished product the government should bonus the production of native ore to the extent of about one dollar for every ton mined and smelted. He said that the iron ore deposits found in Canada require treatment in order to bring them to a parity with foreign ore. The cost of this treatment is from sixty-five cents to one dollar and a half per ton so that the bounty proposed would overcome this disadvantage and stimulate iron mining in Canada. According to Mr. Carrick the iron and steel industry, in spite of the millions of dollars it has received in the way of subsidy in past years, is in a very precarious condition. Several of the larger furnaces, including the big blast furnaces at Port Arthur, Midland, Parry Sound and Deseronto, have been closed down. He drew attention to the fact that in the past it has been the policy of both political parties to encourage this industry, which he claimed ranks next in importance to agriculture and is "the basic fibre of our industrial activity."

Dr. Michael Clarke, of Red Deer, who followed, said that if the tale told by Mr. Carrick had been told before the government composed the speech from the throne there would not have been a reference in that speech to a "slight depression" in Canada. Supporters of the government, too, would have been very much less severe in their speeches upon the leader of the opposition when he attempted to place a truthful picture of the conditions of this country before parliament and the people. He went on to say: "Deplorable and depressed conditions of the industries of Canada is what we hear from the member from Rainy River and Thunder Bay. Well, it took the advocates of the national policy eighteen years to produce that state of affairs before, but we have got a much more clever government in power; they have done it, their own friends being witnesses, in two years. I deplore this, but I wonder if my hon. friend does not think that there is a perfectly natural explanation in his own remarks of how this condition has been brought about. He voted, and he induced his constituents to vote, for the depression of the industry of this country which he himself admits is our primary and greatest industry; for he only claimed the iron industry to be secondary to the great interest of agriculture. Why did he seek the support of the people to depress that industry? Does it not occur to him that if he took the deliberate step of shutting up the markets of the world, or keeping shut up the markets of the world, against the agricultural products of this country and so depressing Canada's primary industry, the secondary industry as a natural result was bound to be depressed also? Why, the very thing he uses in his classification and description of industries gives him the clear explanation of all the phenomena which are so depressing to him as they are to all of us."

Mr. Carrick's proposal received a good deal of sympathy. The majority of those who favored government action were supporters of the government, but approval of the suggestion also came from opposition members, including William German, of Welland, the anti reciprocity Liberal, who said he would vote for anything which would help the steel industry. E. M. Macdonald did not make any such promise, but his speech consisted of a severe criticism of the minister of finance for having failed to do anything for the steel interest during the past two and a half years. It could, therefore, be properly interpreted as a speech in favor of government action in support of this interest.

The minister of finance spoke at considerable length, but carefully refrained from saying anything definite. He said that the government had been making a study of new conditions which have arisen in connection with the manufacture of iron and steel and that the decision of the minister in regard thereto would be announced in connection with budget.

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