SUDBURY'S NICKEL INDUSTRY

The "Sudbury Mining News" published on Sept. 29th the following account of a visit of the Ontario Nickel Commission. The members present were: Chairman G. T. Holloway, Mr. McGregor Young and Mr. T. W. Gibson.

Mayor Travers.

Mayor Travers was first called and the chairman suggested that he give from personal experience his opinion as to the extent of the deposits, developed and undeveloped, the refining of nickel, the taxation of mining companies, etc.

Mayor Travers stated that he had been connected with mining in the district continuously for 25 years, during the past seven years had been engaged in contract work. Had developed the Whistle, Murray, Levack, Blezard, Elsie, Gertrude and other properties, all of which have large quantities of proven ore bodies, amounting to roughly 70,000,000 tons, all contained within 10 miles around the rim of the 130 miles of nickel bearing contact. The percentage is from 3½ per cent. to 6 per cent. nickel-copper, ratio of about two parts nickel to one of copper. In reply to a question as to what he considered a reasonable size for a working deposit, he answered from 300,000 to 9,000,000 tons, and to Mr. Young he stated the average would be about 4 per cent. The most promising surface showings only had been developed, but no doubt there was plenty more equally good. He thought in the early stages of the work that magnetic prospecting would be useful; his knowledge was based on his experience in the Levack field. He considered government reports and maps quite useful and mentioned particularly that of Dr. Coleman.

Mr. Gibson—Can you give an estimate of the quantities of ore held by people outside the large operating companies?

Mr. Travers—No. None have been proven up, except Mt. Nickel. The unproven deposits are mostly on the north range.

Mr. Holloway—What is your view as to taxation of mines and refining?

Mr. Travers—Taxation at the mouth of the pit is always preferable to taxation on ore deposits.

Mr. Gibson—Are you familiar with the conditions in Minnesota and Michigan, where the ore is taxed by proven deposits?

Mr. Travers—No, other than that it checks development of deposits and retards proper mining operations.

Mr. Gibson—Would this plan not be better than our present method?

Mr. Travers—No, the present plan is better. It is much better to tax net profits or ore at the mouth of the pit than the undeveloped property.

Mr. Gibson—Why not tax the mine as the farmer is taxed.

Mr. Travers—The farmer gets revenue even from land that is not tilled, but the mine owner gets nothing from his undeveloped lands.

J. F. Black.

Mr. J. F. Black stated that he has been in the district for 19 years, being interested in various claims as stockholder or owner. He claimed to be fairly familiar with all government reports and to have studied the geology of the district through these. Have had little or no experience in the development of deep mines, and considered the government reports reliable in a general way. With reference to taxation, Mr. Black favored taxation on net profits or at the pit head as much better than on undeveloped property, which would greatly retard progress.

Mr. Gibson—Have you any objection to the present system?

Mr. Black—It is all right, if properly carried out.

Mr. Gibson—In what respect is this law not carried out?

Mr. Black—Some operating companies should be paying a much larger tax to the province than at present, if they were taxed according to their profits. He referred to one company paying only $40,000 a year through special arrangements with the Government of Ontario, whereas it should pay several hundreds of thousands.

Mr. Gibson—Are you aware that the tax is on the value at the pit head, not on the matte.

Mr. Black—Yes, but as I see it the value must be at the pit head to get into the matte, for no values are added further during smelting or refining. The prospector's load should also be lightened, as at present it costs him from $1,000 to $1,500 to secure patent for a 40 acre claim, which was practically prohibitive. I also think the ore should be refined in Canada and that the refinery should be located at such a distance from the boundary as to permit of easy defence in time of war.

W. E. Smith.

Mr. W. E. Smith stated that he had not had much experience in nickel corporations, but was interested as an explorer. Is not in favor of taxing orebodies, as it certainly hinders development and might tend to force properties from small owners to larger ones, for the fact that the former could not pay his taxes.

J. A. Holmes.

Mr. J. A. Holmes said he came to the district as consulting engineer for the International Nickel Co. in the installation of their basic convertor plant six years ago. He afterwards became connected with the Dominion Nickel Co. as manager. They had invested heavily in developed properties which they considered good. They tried to prove them by magnetometric survey, but where the highest readings were the diamond drill found the least ore, but after a year and a half they had prospects of 1,500,000 tons of ore. Magnetic surveys are all right in certain cases, if you can interpret them correctly. The British America Nickel Corporation took over the holdings of the Dominion Co., and have now 17,500 acres of land in the district. The company bought and developed the Lake Superior Copper Co.'s claims and also that of the Viviano. These consist of 50 or 60 claims, of which we have developed 18. The Murray-Elsie is the largest, and we were proving up from 1,000,000 to 1,600,000 tons per month. The development work costs 2c. per ton. As to reserve supply and undeveloped ore, I think this district is only in its infancy. More producing companies will cheapen the product, so that it will become extensively used in nickel steel and in cooking utensils, which can be made directly from the matte like Monel metal, and in heat conducting qualities are far superior to aluminum, having the same cleanly appearance, are as easily cleaned, are quite as sanitary and much cheaper. The cry now is greater production and cheaper cost.

Mr. Gibson—Are you acquainted with the taxation conditions in Minnesota and Michigan?

Mr. Holmes—Yes. Taxation on unproved ore in the ground hinders development. A number of friends of mine in these districts, since that law came into force, have abandoned development work until necessity de-