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THE NICKEL QUESTION

The exportation of nickel is still engaging the attention of some of the daily newspapers. In its issue of Dec. 9 the Toronto Star has an editorial discussing the editorial in our last issue. On Dec. 10 the London correspondent of the Mail and Empire, like the Star, advocates prohibition of the export of nickel to the United States, on the ground that some of it might reach the enemy.

This, to us, seems a short-sighted policy, and one calculated to do more harm to the Allies than to the enemy. We agree that extreme care should be taken that nickel won from Canadian ores should not be obtained by Germany for use against us. But to prevent the chance of an occasional shipment escaping the watchfulness of the War Departments of the Allies our contemporaries would go to the extreme of preventing anyone from obtaining nickel from the International Nickel Company, by forbidding the shipment of matte from the furnaces at Sudbury to the refineries in New Jersey.

We have in Canada neither nickel refineries nor plants for working nickel into nickel-steel. Consequently, to place an embargo on nickel matte outside the Empire would mean that we should export only enough matte to supply the Mond Company's smelter in Wales, close down large mines and smelters in the Sudbury district, throw many men out of work, and cut off a large source of supply of armament for the Allies and friendly neutrals.

Our contemporaries are to be congratulated on their watchfulness of the interests of the Allies and on their desire to cut off the enemy's supply of nickel. But the circumstances are such that their efforts seem likely to result in more assistance to the enemy than to anyone else.

It has yet to be established that nickel won from Canadian ores is reaching the enemy. It is of course probable that he is trying to obtain a supply; but we have no evidence of his success. If the British War Office is of the opinion that nickel is being obtained by Germany some restriction will necessarily be made on the export of matte. But until there is more ground for believing the protection afforded by the navy and the agreements made with neutral powers inadequate, there is no need of extreme measures. In any case a general embargo would not be desirable.

In its issue of December 11, the Mail and Empire says:

"If, as is reported from London, nickel from the United States is reaching Germany, the Canadian Government will doubtless have its attention officially