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## THE ONTARIO GOVERNMENT'S NICKEL POLICY.

The re-organization of the Government of Ontario under the Premiership of Hon. G. W. Ross has been signalized by an important advance in the direction of developing our mineral wealth and securing to the people of the Province the full advantage of the working up of the raw material to an advanced stage of manufacture, hitherto enjoyed by foreigners and in foreign countries.

The recent Order-in-Council issued as an earnest of the policy of the administration in this regard, is the most significant political document which has appeared in late years, considered with reference to its bearings on industrial progress, and the course which it has outlined will meet the cordial approval of all who have the economic welfare of the country at heart.

It has long been evident to those who have given the subject any measure of consideration that in her nickel mines Ontario possesses a source of wealth and prosperity, which, if wisely exploited so as to preserve for her own citizens the benefit of the processes necessary for the manufacture of the finished product, in place of the exportation of the raw material, would result in a vast increase in capital and population and the building up of thriving manufacturing communities in the mining region. As will hereafter be shown, the demand for nickel abroad is continually increasing, while in our principal foreign market, the United States, the domestic supply is so limited that it need hardly be taken into consideration. Under these circumstances we have every opportunity to add to our industries that of nickel manufacturing by prohibiting the export of the raw material. Following the course adopted in connection with the lumbering industry, the Provincial Government proposes, so far as its power and influence extends, to put a stop to the shipment of nickel in its crude form, and otherwise to aid in the building up of the manufacture in Ontario.

The Order-in-Council contains three propositions looking to the encouragement of the nickel manufacture. In view of the importance of this metal in naval construction, it is intended to renew negotiations with the British Government, begun in 1891, with the object of inducing them to accept and

operate a concession of a tract of nickel ores for imperial or national purposes. Should these efforts be successful it will prove an additional factor in stimulating the sentiment of Imperial unity based upon common interest. The most significant feature of the order, however, is that which follows, declaring that if necessary to secure the establishment of refining plants in the Province, it is proposed to ask that effect be given to the Dominion Act under which export duties may be imposed upon nickel and copper, subject to modifications in favor of Britain and other portions of the Empire. It may fairly be presumed that so important a step would hardly have been taken without an understanding with Ottawa looking to the imposition of such a duty. The recognition of the preferential principle, in accordance with which the Empire will be favored as against the United States and other countries which impose a heavy tariff upon our manufactures, is equally gratifying from the standpoint of sound protection and that of enlightened patriotism. In the meantime the Government have put their policy practically into operation to the full extent of their power by providing that all future grants of mining lands shall contain a provision that all ore produced shall be refined in the Province.

In order to enable our readers to fully appreciate the vast benefits which will accrue from the carrying into effect of this broad and statesmanlike policy, some figures showing the growth and extent of the nickel mining industry here, and the capacity of the United States market, which will then be open to fully manufactured nickel are presented. The report for the current year of Mr. Archibald Blue, Director of the Bureau of Mines, contains elaborate tables setting forth the condition of the nickel industry for the seven years, 1892-98, showing for each year the quantities of ore raised and smelted, the product of matte, the estimated metallic contents thereof and their value. The nickel contents in pounds and their value were as follows:—

Year.	Pounds.	Value.	Value per pound, cents.
1892 .....	4,614,000	\$590,502	14.190
1893 .....	3,306,000	454,702	13.754
1894 .....	5,141,000	612,724	11.918
1895 .....	4,631,500	404,861	8.741
1896 .....	3,897,000	357,000	9.166
1897 .....	3,998,000	359,651	8.995
1898 .....	4,567,500	514,220	9.236

During this period the total quantity of ore smelted and reduced to matte in the Sudbury district was 591,852 tons, yielding, in addition to copper, 29,705,000 pounds of nickel, of a total value in the form in which it was exported of \$3,294,060. Had the process of manufacture been completed in Ontario the value of the refined metal at the average selling price would have been \$10,396,750. The copper product of 34,570,500 pounds, valued in its finished state at \$3,975,607, would bring the total up to \$14,372,357. The total outlay for wages in Ontario on account of this production was \$1,929,894—but the share of the value of the refined metals outside of Ontario distributed in wages, services and profits was not less than ten million dollars.

That the prohibition of the export of nickel ore and matte by the imposition of a sufficiently heavy export duty would ensure its manufacture here without lessening the output of the mines is very easily proved by statistics showing that the United States is almost entirely dependent upon us for their supply of nickel.

"The Mineral Industry, its Statistics, Technology and