

his worthiness of being elevated to the judiciary. The same confidence which had so long been felt in his advice and proceedings as a barrister was maintained in his decisions as a judge. He was, as he yet is, and we trust for long years will be, distinguished as a "safe and sound" lawyer. His elevation to be Chief Justice of Ontario was universally regarded as a fit tribute to his professional and personal merit. In private life Sir George W. Burton has won the warm affection of a host of friends. **THE CHRONICLE** has especial pleasure in congratulating Sir George upon the honour paid him by Her Majesty.

THE CANADIAN NICKEL PRODUCTION.

We recently noticed a movement being afoot to secure the cancellation of a Dominion charter granted to a company comprised of American citizens who own, and are working, the nickel mines at Sudbury. It is contended that the Company was granted its charter on condition that the refining of the nickel should be carried on in Canada. At present the situation is analogous to that relating to lumber interests. Americans lease timber limits in Ontario, cut down the trees, and ship the logs to Michigan, so that Canada is a mere

"HEWER OF WOOD" TO THE STATES

instead of being a manufacturer of her own raw materials. In the nickel matter Canada is much in the same position, only with this difference, the nickel territory is owned in fee simple by Americans, who ship the *matte*, or unrefined ore, to New Jersey, where it is refined. It is so far a cry from North Ontario to New Jersey, we wonder why the *matte* is carried thither but the mine owners doubtless have good reasons for its transportation to such a distance. An enquiry has been going on for years as to the presence of nickel deposits in the States in connection with an effort to restrict the importation of the ores from Canada by high duties. High duties, however, have their limit of power. They could protect the native product from competition, and so aid in its development, but, when there is no native product, high duties can do nothing to create what nature has denied.

CANADA'S MONOPOLY.

Canada has an absolute monopoly of what nickel exists on this continent in an available form for commerce, consequently it was in a position to dictate terms to whoever wanted nickel. Unfortunately, our own capitalists allowed the mines to become the property of Americans, whereby we lost a splendid opportunity of having the refining industry established in Canada. The *matte* is produced at a cost of \$25 per ton. It is sent over Canadian railways, which receive some \$28,000 per month in freight for

the carriage of nickel ores. One-third of the refined metal is consumed in the States, one-half of which is used by the American Government, the rest of the product going to Europe. As is the case of logs, the expenditure in Canada upon the production of the nickel for shipment to the States is only about one-fourth of the expenditure in the States in the work of refining and handling the metal. It is stated that \$1,200,000 yearly is spent at the New Jersey smelting works in preparing a Canadian product for the market. Were this work carried on in Canada, as it should be, it would be a material addition to our industrial and commercial resources. Another million and a quarter spent in Canada for the labour, fuel, clerical and other services needed at large smelting works would be very helpful to our people. The President of the Canadian Copper Company, which is an Ohio corporation that operates the nickel mines of Canada, recently said: "We have preferred to have this work done in our own country, the States; we have preferred to give our people, Americans, the benefit of it." Quite so! The pity is that the same patriotic spirit did not lead to the acquisition of the nickel mines by Canadian capitalists, or, failing that, the compelling of American owners to establish a refinery in this Dominion for "our people to have the whole benefit" of its mineral wealth. As Mr. E. B. Osler, Q.C., has the case in hand to enforce the observance of the alleged conditions under which the Americans are working, we may rest confident that everything will be done that is possible to be done by legal ability.

MONTREAL FIRES IN 1897.

This city had fewer serious fires last year than for some years. The fire brigade was called out 708 times, which is 15 in excess of the alarms responded to in 1896. But, though the fire brigade was summoned oftener, the number of fires of a serious character was very much less than in the previous year. There were only two fires which it took four hours to subdue, and only fifteen fires that continued one hour. Considering the confined area in which some of these city fires occurred, which so hampered the operations of the brigade as to prolong their labours, and other hindrances to their prompt and effectual operations, we regard the above record as eminently creditable to the fire brigade. The two worst fires of the past year were those at the warehouse of Messrs. Crathern & Caverhill on Jan. 14th, entailing a loss of \$181,500, and one which caused a loss of \$150,000, at the Dominion Glass Works on the 18th December. A less serious one occurred of a sash factory, on Main St. in January, with a loss of \$35,000. When the report of the City Fire Commission has been compiled we shall be able to give a complete statement and analysis of the city's fire record for 1897.