

but their descendants, and the newcomers, many of them city dwellers, or children of city dwellers, do not see any reason for the precautions. It is true that a process of education is being attempted by the various government departments and bureaus. Carefully worded placards are posted everywhere in and near forest lands, asking the people to be careful in the use of fire and pointing out the possible consequences in destruction of property and life, if these precautions are not observed. The Canadian Forestry Association has taken up this propaganda energetically; and, by the way, the secretary, Mr. Robson Black, in a recent pamphlet, makes it quite clear that the Ontario law is defective both in its provisions and in its administration. These educative efforts are good, and have aroused a very large body of public opinion which now demands action. It can be safely assumed that intelligent, well informed Canadians are of one opinion as to the necessity for action, although it is rather disturbing to find journals like the Toronto Daily News and the Canadian Mining Journal taking comfort from the reflection that the recent fires in Northern Ontario will make prospecting easier! That is exactly the attitude of the prospector who starts a fire for the purpose! I do not think there are many real prospectors who would do it, but I know there are a few."

We agree with a great deal of what Dr. Goodwin has to say; but must protest against his statement that the "Canadian Mining Journal" has any such unnatural opinion concerning forest fires. Surely none who know of the sufferings caused by the disastrous fires which have visited our north country could hold such views as Dr. Goodwin gives us credit for. We believe that he has no justification for making such a statement.

It is a fact that forest fires sometimes assist the prospector. The fact, however, does not warrant Dr. Goodwin in assuming that we take comfort from the destruction of life and property. We cannot imagine why he should wish to give his readers such an impression of us. His statement is certainly not based on reliable information.

Dr. Goodwin has had excellent opportunities for observing conditions in our northern forests and his outspoken statements are worthy of the attention of those responsible for the enforcement of the laws.

In some respects our experience does not coincide with that of Dr. Goodwin. We have generally found that the Ontario prospector has learned by experience to dread forest fires and that his life in the forest has led him to appreciate the extent of the losses through fire. It is doubtless true that prospectors are to blame for some fires, but most of these men have a good deal of respect for the fire regulations. We venture to state that railway companies, settlers and tourists are more often to blame for fires than are prospectors.

Dr. Goodwin claims that "forest fires are usually started by people who are ignorant, careless or criminal." In which of these classes does he place the railway companies?

Dr. Goodwin says, in conclusion: "We Canadians should cultivate carefully a patriotism which includes the idea that our country with all its resources is a trust to be handed on to succeeding generations, not only unimpaired, but increased in value." This idea as applied to forests Dr. Goodwin will find to be well supported by northern prospectors. There are few greater admirers of our forest wealth than those who live in the woods.

THE VALUE OF NICKEL MATTE

The Department of Customs in a report just issued states that during July, 1916, there was exported matte, ore and speiss containing 105,477 cwt. nickel valued at \$1,193,604.

It may be safely assumed that practically all this nickel was from the smelters of the Sudbury district. The month's production of nickel when refined would be worth over \$4,000,000.

The Department of Customs continues thus to publish figures which show that nickel in matte is worth only about one quarter of the value of refined nickel.

In previous issues we have raised the question as to whether certain figures published by our Government Departments are reliable. Official reports are worse than worthless if they are not accurate. They are not only a waste of the people's money, but they are dangerously misleading. We may, therefore, assume that the Department of Customs considers that nickel in matte is worth about 11.3 cents per pound. The question then arises as to whether or not the companies concerned also consider it a fair price.

If the companies consider that eleven cents a pound is a fair price, then the course for our Government is clear. We should at once make arrangements to take over all the matte on that basis and refine it ourselves. The Government would net a handsome profit in buying matte at eleven cents and selling the refined product at forty. In addition we would be satisfying the companies by giving them what they consider a fair price for their matte. The problem of control of nickel would also be simplified.

The above suggestion seems a reasonable one. We doubt, however, whether it could be satisfactorily followed out. We suspect that it would soon be found that the value placed on nickel matte by the Department of Customs is in need of adjustment.

THE DEUTSCHLAND'S CARGO

In an interview given to the Associated Press, Lord Robert Cecil, Minister of War Trade, said: "When I tell you that the Deutschland took on board in America certain vitally necessary metals, of which there is a serious shortage in Germany for munition purposes, and that there is reason to believe that these particular metals were a part of the small stock mined in allied territory, you will see how important it is that we should take precautions to prevent allied property getting into the hands of those we know will use it to help our enemy."

It is well known that nickel was one of the "certain vitally necessary metals" taken to Germany by her adventurous merchant submarine. For some reason the origin of this nickel has not been made public. According to statements which have appeared in eastern papers it was known that certain firms were holding a supply of nickel for shipment from the United States to Germany at the first opportunity. That such was the case