

NICKEL—PROVINCIAL ROYALTY VS. EXPORT DUTY.

GREAT opportunities are not always presenting themselves to men, and when they appear it is not edifying to observe that the favored one failed to grasp it and, by improving it, lift himself head and shoulders above his surrounding mortals. When the death of Mr. Mackenzie created a vacancy in the House of Commons, the constituency were told by the now sitting member that great reforms were needed in the government of the country, and that he was just the man to effect them. We give Mr. Maclean credit for what he did and is doing in the way of obtaining lower fares on the railroads. In that particular he is on the right track. He showed much resolution and courage in ignoring his party and its leaders who would not take sides with him in antagonizing the railroad interests; and he has the satisfaction of knowing that the masses of the people are with him. This was a great opportunity which he made for himself, and for what he is attempting he deserves unbounded credit.

But Mr. Maclean is not as perceptive of his great opportunity in the nickel question. He is evidently fully appreciative of the situation, and feels in his conscience that something should be done whereby Canada might reap some of the benefits arising from our possession of such vast inert wealth as exists at Sudbury. He knows that the largest and most available deposit of nickel known to the world is in Canada. He knows the value of nickel as a component in the manufacture of armor plates. He knows that all the nickel used in the armor of the new American navy is produced in Canada. He knows that American capitalists own vast tracts of nickel lands at Sudbury, and that they control a very large proportion of the output—probably three-fourths of the nickel mines of that district. He knows that because of the exceedingly bulky character of the ores, and that it is more economical to treat them at the mines than elsewhere, that any labor is bestowed upon them in Canada after they are removed from the earth, and that all that is done to and with them is merely to reduce their bulk and make the transportation of them cheaper. He knows that the product of this primitive treatment, matte, is carried to work in the United States where, in the refining processes to which it is subjected, it gives employment to American capital, occupation to American workmen and freight to American railroads. He knows, too, that after this Canadian product has crossed the international boundary, no Canadian workman may follow it, expecting to obtain employment in the manipulations of it except they forswear allegiance to Canada and become American citizens. And he also knows that although he argues that the Ontario Government can benefit Canada by imposing a royalty on such nickel ore as may be raised from mines in certain localities, the mines that are now being worked, and which are producing such vast quantities of ore, and the lands covering and containing these deposits, are entirely beyond the reach and operation of the mining law of Ontario. Mr. Mowat's government may impose royalties on such mining operations as are carried on on lands over which it has control, but no such lands are now producing nickel ore in commercial quantities; and no such control is possible over the other lands. This is the situation, and Mr. Maclean knows it.

It is strange, then, that in his paper, the *World*, he should assume a position on this question ignoring some of these facts, and in advancing arguments which are palpably inconsistent, to say nothing of an exhibition of ignorance entirely inexcusable in a great daily newspaper. For instance, the *World* tells us that it is probable that when Mr. Cleveland comes into office his government will adopt a policy by which the exports of our crude nickel, in the ore or the matte, will be increased. That is just what the McKinley tariff did. Previous to the passage of that law the United States imposed a duty upon the nickel contained in either the ore or matte, but now they are free—pray how much freer could they be? It tells us, too, "the United States already has its eyes upon our Sudbury mines," and that "unless we awaken to the facts of this matter, we shall be left out in the cold by our enterprising neighbors arranging to take the crude ores or matte from our territory, and reaping a splendid harvest from supplying the world's markets with nickel steel, which we were too stupid to reap." Yes, yes: not only the eyes of the United States has been upon our Sudbury mines, but its hands are actually upon them, for the most important of them are the personal property of American citizens and Yankee corporations.

Mr. Maclean and his *World* fail to grasp the situation when he supposes that the evils he complains of can be remedied by the Ontario Government. Why should Mr. Mowat endeavor to "head off" the manufacturers of Cleveland and Pittsburgh in their efforts to develop an important industry in their country? Sneering at "the notorious Mr. Carnegie" and his "Triumphant Democracy" will not prevent him from engaging in a lawful and laudable business; nor could the interference of Mr. Mowat have any better effect. The Dominion Government alone have the authority and the power to give the industry to Canada which is now so flourishing in the United States, and to which Canada is seemingly a willing contributor. In view of the real facts of the matter we insist that Mr. Maclean and the *World* miss a great opportunity when an editorial in that journal reads as follows:—

If the Ontario Government is wise it will tell Mr. Pinkerton-Detective Carnegie and all his kin in the States that Canada is not parting with crude nickel at present, but that, if they chose, they can erect works on this side and employ as many men as they wish in their enterprises, so long as they are put on Canadian soil. * * * But although Ontario is rich, she is not so well off that she can afford to dissipate her wealth like a fool spendthrift, as she will if our mines are not made feeders to those industries for which our minerals are the raw materials.

Mr. Maclean is a member of the Dominion House of Commons and counts one in that beastly more than two-thirds majority when divisions are demanded, and because he is—because he is on the strong side—because he has already given a splendid exhibition of statesmanship in the question of reduction of railroad fares, and because he knows better, we are surprised at such an exhibition of superficialism as is displayed in the extract we have given. It is unstatesmanlike, in fact it is silly. The Dominion Government and its more than two-thirds majority have it in their power to force Mr. Carnegie and other American manufacturing capitalists to establish important industrial works in Canada. The Ontario Government