

The Journal of Commerce

DEPT. AGRICULTURE
RECEIVED
AUG 1 1916
INSTITUTE BRANCH

Vol. XLII., No. 5

MONTREAL, TUESDAY, AUGUST 1, 1916

Price Ten Cents

The Journal of Commerce

Devoted to

CANADIAN INDUSTRY, COMMERCE
AND FINANCE.

Published every Tuesday Morning by

The Journal of Commerce Publishing Company,
Limited.

35-45 St. Alexander Street, Montreal.
Telephone: Main 2662.

HON. W. S. FIELDING,
President and Editor-in-Chief.

Subscription price, \$3.00 a year.
Single copies, 10 cents.
Advertising rates on application.

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Special Articles

Canada's Great Shipbuilding Problem.
By George Tyler.

Women on the Land.
By W. E. Dowding.

Conditions in the West.
By E. Cora Hind.

Wounded Soldiers in Training.

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The Export of Canadian Nickel

THE nickel question has again come very prominently to the front. It seems to be admitted that the German submarine merchant vessel Deutschland, which brought a cargo of dyestuffs from Bremen to Baltimore, is taking, as a part of her return cargo, a quantity of nickel, an article much needed by the Germans for their manufacture of armor plates and munitions. It is contended, not unreasonably, that this nickel probably is of Canadian origin. Naturally a strong protest is raised in Canada against Canadian nickel being used for such purposes. A general denial that the nickel is Canadian is not deemed satisfactory. Apart from the Canadian deposits at Sudbury and the ores to be found in the mines of New Caledonia—a French island in the Pacific—the world's supply of nickel is very small. The Canadian deposits in part are owned by the Mond Company, which takes its crude nickel to Swansea, in Wales, for refining, and in greater part by the International Nickel Company, a company having its headquarters in New York and its refinery in New Jersey. The company has a few Canadian stockholders, but is practically an American concern. There is a strong demand, which has found expression in many journals, for the prohibition of the shipment of the crude nickel from Canada to the United States. That the nickel taken by the Deutschland is Canadian is firmly believed by many, for the reason that there is an alliance, if nothing closer, between the American and French nickel companies, and it is contended that crude nickel would not be brought to the States from the distant New Caledonia mines, while the near-by Canadian mines are available. But, so the argument runs, even if this particular lot of nickel on board the Deutschland is not Canadian, but is drawn from the few other possible sources, it is the supply of Canadian nickel to the general industry in the States that sets the other free for German use, and therefore the stoppage of the export of the Canadian article to the States would shut off all the supply to Germany. The argument appeals strongly to public opinion in Canada. The idea that the Canadian nickel supply shall be so handled that, directly or indirectly, it enables Germany to obtain this metal to be used against the Allies, including our own soldiers, is something that shocks our people, who are ready to support any movement that will give additional assurance against the possibility of Germany receiving nickel.

Yet there is another side to the question, and grave reason to doubt whether the prohibition of the export as proposed would serve the good purpose which is so generally approved.

While no condition could be pleaded to ex-

cuse the shipment of Canadian nickel to our enemies, the shipment of the article to the United States may be and probably is necessary to enable the British forces and the Allies to obtain the metal for their own purposes. There is talk of a refinery to be built in Canada by the International Company, which has given the Government some kind of assurance that this will be done. But not a sod has yet been turned; indeed the location of the refinery has not been determined. An establishment of this kind cannot be created quickly. While this movement is under consideration, and will no doubt ultimately be carried out, it does nothing to meet the immediate demand for refined nickel. The Mond refinery, at Swansea, in Wales, is working to its full capacity to supply the needs of the British Admiralty and War Office, and the large number of munition factories in Great Britain. The product of the Canadian ores treated at the American refinery is needed both for shipment to Great Britain and for supplies for the American contractors who are making munitions for the Allies. A prohibition of the export of Canadian nickel to the United States at present, therefore, instead of being a wise war measure, would be the very opposite, for it would shut off one of the chief sources of the supply of nickel to Britain and her Allies.

It is, of course, of the highest importance that care should be taken that the Canadian nickel shall not be supplied to our enemies. Assurances have from time to time been given to the public that the arrangements under which the nickel is treated at the American refineries are such as to guarantee this. On this point there have been many doubting Thomases and their number has of late increased. If the matter depended upon the assurance of the International Nickel Company there might still be room for doubt and suspicion, for, while the officials of the company are men of high standing in the business world, they are interested parties and therefore not competent to give unassailable evidence in such a case. But it has been authoritatively stated that the British Government have been kept fully informed of the destination of the nickel from the American refinery and that the arrangements under which the business is done are satisfactory to them. If that be the fact, what more can be asked? One is not called upon to be more loyal than the King. If the War Office in London has enquired into this important matter and become satisfied that all is well, surely Canadians may be content with the position.

The Mond Nickel Co.

AS mentioned in another article, a part of the valuable nickel deposits at Sudbury, Ontario, is owned by the Mond Nickel