

# CANADA ASBESTOS SHOULD BE KEPT FROM GERMANY

Quebec Province Furnishes 80 Per Cent. of World's Supply.

## ENEMY AFTER IT TO USE IN SHIPS

Germans Making Efforts to Buy It Through Certain Dutch Agencies.

In a recent letter to the press his Honor Judge Barron, of Stratford, brought up the question of the advisability of the Canadian Government taking steps to prevent this country's production of nickel going to build German battleships and war munitions, to be used against the British Empire, and advocated the taking of steps to either ensure the refining of the nickel matte—which is the shape in which Canada's nickel product is exported—in Canada, or to prevent the product from being exported at all.

The judge's article drew attention to the very evident absurdity of the practice of fighting the foe with one hand and supplying him with war materials with the other.

The world has two sources from which it draws the supply of nickel from which is made the nickel steel that is so prominent a feature of battleship construction, viz., Canada and New Caledonia, the one a part of the British Empire, the other belonging to France. As other sources are practically nil, it is evident that the Kaiser's dreadnoughts are largely built of either Canadian or French material, and that if the export of nickel to Germany could be stopped the warlike construction of that country would be very seriously crippled.

### Canada's Nickel Production.

Canada in 1904 produced about 9,500 tons of nickel matte and exported practically all of it; and this production by 1912 had more than doubled, the production being roughly 22,400 tons. All this nickel matte, chiefly from the Sudbury mines, went to the New Jersey smelters for refining, and what became of it after that it is not easy to say. Uncle Sam no doubt used a good deal of it, since he is in the battleship business himself. Great Britain no doubt got some of it. Germany would get some, too.

In 1913, according to the Statistical Abstract of the U. S., that country imported 36,968 tons of nickel ore or matte, valued at \$6,400,000, and exported nickel and manufactures of nickel to the value of nearly \$37,000,000.

As it is evident from what is learned about the present war that Germany has been preparing for it for a long time, it is quite likely that that country is pretty well stocked up with nickel, but whether she is or is not it ought to be not too difficult for the Canadian Government to devise ways of seeing to it that no more Canadian nickel goes to the Empire's enemies.

### Germany Needs Asbestos.

There has been some discussion as to the advisability of Canada taking similar action with regard to her copper, but Canada's copper production is relatively unimportant and if the worst came to the worst Germany could sheath her navy bottoms with copper from her own mines in Saxony, which are quite productive. There is another mineral, however, in which, like nickel, Canada appears to hold the whip hand, viz., asbestos. Germany does not build warships of asbestos, but she uses a lot of it in their construction. Canada could very well see to it that her supplies of this mineral are cut off for the present.

The pre-eminence of Canada in asbestos production will be understood when it is stated that probably eighty per cent. of the world's total asbestos supply comes from the Province of Quebec. Of the rest Russia—an ally of Britain—produces about 15 per cent. and the remaining 5 per cent. comes from scattered mines. Canada's production in 1912 was valued roughly at about \$3,000,000, and up to the present Germany has got about twenty per cent., or one-fifth of what Canada produced.

### Order It Through Dutch.

Of late, according to Montreal advices, German agents have been after Canadian asbestos, the orders, of course, coming through Dutch sources, and it is said the bidders have displayed an almost uncanny knowledge of the quantities and

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grades of the mineral in stock. In some cases these orders have been refused, but here again is an instance where the Government might very well take a hand in the game and exercise a censorship without depending on the loyalty or acuteness of the individual producer.

It is only a day or so ago that a Canadian flour milling company was notified that a consignment of its flour had been seized by a French warship as conditional contraband. It had been consigned to a firm at Amsterdam and the French authorities evidently suspected, that that Canadian flour was intended for transshipment to Germany. On being notified the Canadian millers arranged to ship no more flour to private firms in Holland, but it seems that there ought to be some way by which the Canadian Government might save our manufacturers from the humiliation of such incidents and our allies from the necessity of keeping an eye on our exporters, by undertaking to supervise our exports so as to effectively block the enterprise of German agents seeking to secure in Canada materials wherewith to wage war on the British Empire.