

Chairman's Summary — Section 5

by A.L. MELVILL*

We had an extremely interesting talk from Mr Magruder on the future of the ferro-alloy industry in the world, and I think it has a very special significance to the ferro-alloy industry of South Africa. Obviously, we have all the major constituents that one requires for this industry, and probably a major factor is the fact that we are using electrical energy that is derived from a raw material located in the country and that is not dependent on an imported fuel such as oil. Mr Magruder did, however, indicate to us that, although we do have all these facilities at our disposal, the ferro-alloy industry should not become complacent. I think his two comments on silicon metal and medium-carbon ferromanganese indicate that, in other parts of the world where energy is perhaps not a major factor, but where a more serious situation exists than there is in South Africa, processes are being developed to reduce the energy requirements in the production of these alloys.

I think that, in South Africa, we have seen this week, through the papers presented by Dr Robinson's team, and Professor Howat's team, that we are not being complacent and are trying to keep up with developments. South Africa is indeed very fortunate to have two people like Dr Robinson and Professor Howat to assist in this direction.

Dr Person and Mr Lømo have given us a very interesting insight into what is required in air-pollution control equipment and what can be done. From Mr Meintjes' comments on that very beautiful slide that Dr Nasu showed us at the beginning of the Congress, we have seen physical evidence of what can be done to clean up air pollution from the ferro-alloy industry. I personally believe that all of us who are in this industry have a duty to the world to clean up our plant pollution. The major problem we have at the present time is the fantastic capital outlay and not the low operating costs of running the plants, and I think that this is an opportune time to comment on a thought that the ferro-alloy world should consider at this point. This Congress has been promoted at a fantastic time. Everybody here has come with the knowledge that most producers have committed all their output, and there has been no behind-the-scenes wheeling and dealing, if you like to put it that way, because everybody has come here to show interest in the Congress, enjoy themselves, and get to know everybody in this industry.

I should like to leave you with the following thought: Is this not the time for us to consider ways and means of preventing any serious price-cutting when the next downturn does come along? Let us be ready for it and keep ourselves a very viable industry.

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