Section 6.—Production of Non-Metallic Minerals (Excluding Fuels)

The most important Canadian minerals included in this group are asbestos, gypsum, quartz, salt and sulphur, and for each of these a brief description of occurrence and production follows. A reference to Table 2 at p. 285 and Table 6 at pp. 289-290 shows numerous other minerals, used chiefly for chemical and industrial purposes, which are classified under this group. Among these may be mentioned feldspar, graphite, iron oxides (ochre), magnesitic dolomite, mica, nepheline-syenite, silica brick, sodium sulphate, talc and soapstone. Statistics of production for recent years of these and other minerals of lesser importance appear in the tables mentioned above.

Asbestos.—Canada produces more asbestos than any other country. The value of the annual output of asbestos increased from less than $25,000 in 1880 to $14,792,201 in 1920 and $13,172,581 in 1929. Owing to trade depression, production was much curtailed from 1929 to 1932, as will be seen from Table 32. However, since 1932, production has shown a distinct improvement. In 1939 (latest year for which figures are available) Canada produced 325,421 long tons, while other leading countries with their production in long tons* were: Southern Rhodesia, 52,065; Union of South Africa, 19,617; United States, 13,515; and Cyprus, 9,836. The production of Russia and of several other countries that produce smaller amounts is not available.

The Eastern Townships of Quebec have for many years been the most productive asbestos-mining area in the world. The veins of chrysotile asbestos vary in width from ¼ inch to ½ inch and occasionally fibre has been obtained several inches in length. The fibre is of good quality and well adapted to spinning. Both open-cut and underground methods of mining are employed throughout the Canadian asbestos fields. Nearly all the mining companies have installed machinery for the crushing, fibrizing, screening and grading of the mine product. Some development work has been conducted on an asbestos property at Rahn Lake, Bannockburn Township, Ontario; the fibre in this deposit is reported as being of high quality.

There are 13 plants in Canada that manufacture asbestos products, including the following commodities: asbestos paper and mill board; asbestos roofing of all kinds; asbestos rigid shingles; asbestos building materials; asbestos cellular and sponge-felted pipe insulation; insulating sheets and blocks; asbestos yarn; asbestos dryer felts; asbestos brake linings and clutch facings (woven on special looms); and asbestos packings for steam, oil and hydraulic operation.

* Figures from the Imperial Institute's Statistical Summary.

32.—Quantities and Values of Asbestos Produced in Canada, 1926-40

NOTE.—Figures for the years 1896 to 1910, inclusive, will be found at p. 424 of the 1911 Year Book and for the years 1911 to 1925 at p. 354 of the 1939 edition.

Year	Quantity	Value	Year	Quantity	Value	Year	Quantity	Value
	short tons	$		short tons	$		short tons	$
1926.....	279,403	10,099,423	1931....	164,296	4,812,886	1936....	301,287	9,958,183
1927.....	274,778	10,621,013	1932....	122,977	3,039,721	1937....	410,026	14,505,791
1928.....	273,033	11,238,360	1933....	158,367	5,211,177	1938....	289,793	12,890,195
1929.....	306,055	13,172,581	1934....	155,980	4,936,326	1939....	364,472	15,859,212
1930.....	242,114	8,390,163	1935....	210,467	7,054,614	1940....	[1]	[1]

[1] War-time restrictions preclude the publication of data for 1940.