

The international situation has brought a complete change of emphasis in the whole field of investment and resource development, as will be apparent from the previous section. In the new circumstances the public investment program has been modified, with cutbacks in all fields not essential to the defence effort. In the field of private industry also, the administration of the regulations on the use of steel places the emphasis on essential investment.

Housing.—During 1950 approximately 92,000 dwelling units were completed in Canada, of which about two out of five were constructed with financial assistance from the Federal Government, principally under the National Housing Act. During the year seven provinces passed legislation enabling participation in joint projects with the Federal Government under provisions of the 1949 amendment to the National Housing Act. The projects provided for relate to land assembly and unit construction for sale or rent. Projects of both types have been undertaken. It is to be expected that 1951 housing starts will be fewer than those of 1950, in the face of reduced availability of building materials, but assurance has been given that housing will receive priority second only to defence.

Social Security.—A parliamentary inquiry was held in 1950 into a universal old age pension plan. Following the committee's report, discussions were held late in the year between the Federal and Provincial Governments and considerable progress was reported in efforts to bring a specific plan into early operation.

In February of 1950, the Unemployment Insurance Act was amended in several important respects. The major changes were the provision of supplementary benefits in the first three months of each calendar year under certain conditions, and a widening of coverage to include persons earning up to \$4,800 and to bring lumbermen and loggers under the Act. Increased rates of contribution and of benefits were established and the level of permissive earnings while unemployed was increased.

Since 1948 health grants have been made by the Federal Government. The grants are related to various health activities and are conditional upon provinces making specified outlays in the field. Actual expenditures by the Federal Government amounted to about \$22,000,000 in 1950, and by the end of the year the number of projects dealt with had increased to about 3,000.

General.—The Transitional Measures Act was extended last year to Apr. 30, 1951. The Government has indicated that federal rent control will terminate with the Act on that date, although the new Emergency Powers Act would give it authority to re-enter the field should that become necessary. Newfoundland and Saskatchewan already have provincial rent control measures in force, Newfoundland since before entry into union and Saskatchewan since April, 1950. Several other provinces have indicated their intention to institute controls, including Ontario, Quebec, Alberta and Manitoba.

During 1950, agricultural price supports were provided for eggs and butter through the Agricultural Prices Support Board, while cheese and bacon supplied under export contracts received some price assistance by direct appropriation of Parliament.

The policy of granting assistance on the movement of Canadian coal from Eastern and Western mines to Central Canadian markets was continued throughout the year. This assistance has been generally that amount needed to put Canadian coal at the same price level as imported coal in the specific markets. The assistance has usually been paid to the transportation agents with a consequent reduction in the net freight costs. There were no changes throughout the year in the Orders in Council regulating the payment of this assistance. The Coke Bounty Act