

**Current Production.**—The mining industry in Canada had one of its best years in 1949. Increases in output tonnages of the major minerals more than offset the effects of the declines in base-metal prices and the total value of mineral production showed a substantial advance to an all-time high of \$901,000,000. This value was nearly 10 p.c. greater than the \$820,000,000 for 1948, but it included data for Newfoundland for the first time. If the \$28,000,000 for the new province were excluded, the gain in value over 1948 would be reduced to 6 p.c. or \$53,000,000. The entry of Newfoundland into Confederation helped considerably in boosting the nation's output of iron ore, lead, zinc and fluorspar.

In volume of output, advances over 1948 were recorded for most of the leading minerals. Production of zinc increased 23 p.c. and copper was up 11 p.c.; gold advanced 17 p.c. and silver 10 p.c.; coal, crude petroleum and natural gas were at record levels, up 4 p.c., 73 p.c. and 23 p.c., respectively; cement increased 13 p.c. and stone 19 p.c. However, because of labour disputes the tonnage of asbestos was down 20 p.c. Output of gypsum declined 6 p.c., lead was down 6 p.c. and nickel 2 p.c.

Employment in the industry was probably higher in 1949 than in any other year. The official index of employment for the mineral industries averaged 100·9 (June 1, 1941=100) as against 98·0 in 1948, an increase of about 3 p.c. On this basis the number of employees was approximately 116,000 in 1949. Salaries and wages paid to these workers during the year totalled about \$290,000,000.

In the second quarter of 1949 the market prices for refined copper, lead and zinc fell off rather abruptly but recovered considerably during the last half of the year. Copper, which was quoted at 23½ cents per lb. on the New York market at the beginning of the year, declined to 16½ cents in June and closed the year at 18½ cents. Zinc which at the opening was 17½ cents per lb., receded to 9½ cents, and was quoted at 9¾ cents at the year end. Lead began the year at 21½ cents per lb., declined to 12 cents in June, rose to 15 in September, and averaged 12 cents in December. In terms of Canadian dollars, the average prices for the year were: copper, 19·97 cents; zinc, 13·25 cents; and lead, 15·80 cents; compared with 22·35 cents, 13·93 cents and 18·04 cents, respectively, in 1948.

Despite the lower average prices for these major items, the value of all metals recovered in 1949 was 10 p.c. above the corresponding figure for 1948 and the total of \$539,000,000 was, in fact, greater than for any preceding year. However, the quantities of copper, lead, zinc, nickel and gold were below the record amounts recovered in 1941 to 1943 when the war effort was at its peak.

Output of structural materials was greater than in any previous year, the 1949 value of \$113,900,000 being about 8 p.c. above the 1948 total. Shipments of clay products, cement and stone were higher than in the previous year, but sales of lime, sand and gravel were considerably less.

The value of mineral fuels at \$183,700,000 was much greater than ever before. The principal advances were in crude petroleum and natural gas, but coal was up substantially. Other non-metallics declined slightly in output value principally because of the shut-down for several months of most of the asbestos mines.