

Exports of the four principal non-ferrous base metals in all forms continued to go mainly to United States and were valued at \$537,686,829 in 1956, a \$39,560,000 increase over the previous year. Exports, in primary forms, of copper increased from 194,764 tons in 1955 to 215,837 tons in 1956 and of nickel from 173,880 tons to 176,838 tons, but exports of lead decreased from 150,867 tons in 1955 to 129,607 tons in 1956, and of zinc from 404,422 tons to 383,041 tons. The United States bought, in primary forms, 30 p.c. more copper in 1956 than in the previous year, 3 p.c. more zinc, 3 p.c. less nickel and 30 p.c. less lead. The United Kingdom bought, in primary forms, 7 p.c. less copper, 12 p.c. less lead, 32 p.c. less zinc and about the same amount of nickel.

Base metal prices were generally high in January 1956 and, with the exception of copper, remained fairly steady throughout the year. During the first half of 1957, however, a slackening in demand led to a decline in prices and in June 1957, at the end of the period under review, the prices of copper, lead and zinc in particular had fallen off considerably. Copper showed the greatest fluctuation, rising from 43 cents a pound in January 1956 to 46 cents a pound in February 1956 then declining to 45.375 cents in June and to 35 cents in October 1956, closing the year at 34.750 cents a pound. In 1957 it dropped steadily to 27.88 cents by the end of June that year. Zinc remained at 13.50 cents a pound throughout 1956 and until May 1957 when it dropped to 11.50 cents a pound and then to 10.50 cents a pound at the end of June 1957. Lead was 15.62 cents a pound in January 1956 and 15.50 cents a pound during the remainder of 1956. In January 1957 it dropped to 15.25 cents a pound, remaining there until May when it dropped again to 14.75 cents a pound and to 13.25 cents a pound at the end of June 1957. Nickel was 63 cents (Canadian) a pound in 1956 until December when it was raised to 70 cents a pound.

The decline in prices was followed by a drop in the production of several of the metals. During the first six months of 1957, copper decreased 4 p.c. in volume of output below that of the same period in 1956 to 335,688,000 lb.; lead, 2 p.c. to 182,878,000 lb.; and zinc, 9 p.c. to 391,618,000 lb. Nickel, however, rose 6 p.c. to 190,732,000 lb. and iron ore 3 p.c. to 5,837,000 long tons.

Accounts of developments in metal mining on a regional basis follow.

**British Columbia.**—Canada's major source of lead and zinc, British Columbia draws around 56 p.c. of the total value of its mineral production from these two metals. Output comes mainly from the famous Sullivan mine of The Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company of Canada Limited at Kimberley, the largest lead-zinc-silver mine in the world. The Province's metal production also comprises copper, silver, gold, tungsten concentrates, and iron ore, in order of value, and minor amounts of antimony, bismuth, cadmium, indium and tin. British Columbia ranks fourth among the provinces and territories in value of mineral production and is the only Canadian source of antimony, indium and tin.

Highlights of the period under review were: the expenditure of large capital sums on the development of the natural gas and crude petroleum industries in the northeastern part of the Province; the exploration for and development of copper properties in various areas, and an unequalled amount of exploratory activity for new sources of mineral wealth.

Of much significance to the future development of British Columbia's metal-mining industry and to the Province's whole industrial potential were the continued disclosure of great quantities of natural gas, the discovery in commercial quantities of crude petroleum in the Peace River area, and the outstanding progress made toward marketing this gas in southern British Columbia and in the United States. (Developments in natural gas and crude petroleum in the Province are described in a separate article on p. 510.)

Higher average prices for lead and zinc contributed greatly to the record value of \$199,318,000 of the Province's mineral output in 1956, a 5-p.c. increase over the record set in the previous year. Zinc output increased from 431,772,000 lb. valued at \$58,937,000 in 1955 to 443,711,000 lb. valued at \$65,714,000 in 1956 while lead declined from 322,985,000 lb. valued at \$46,445,000 to 290,277,000 lb. worth \$45,022,000. Consolidated Mining and Smelting produced 386,082,000 lb. of zinc, a record for the second successive year, and 298,524,000 lb. of lead. Concentrates came from the Company's four mines—the Sullivan, the H.B. near Salmo, the Bluebell at Riodel and the Tulsequah Chief in northern British