

The Prairie Provinces.—The marked expansion of uranium mining in the Beaverlodge area of northern Saskatchewan and the rapid growth in Manitoba's base-metal potential highlighted the outstanding progress made in metal mining in these two provinces during the review period. With the exception of a minor amount of placer gold, Alberta, which lies almost entirely in the Interior Plains region, has no metal production.

The value of Saskatchewan's metal production increased from \$54,709,000 in 1955 to \$70,671,000 in 1956, mainly because of the increase in the value of uranium output, while that of Manitoba showed a slight decline to \$39,209,000 as a result of reduced sales of nickel concentrate. The operations of Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting Company Limited remain the major source of the base-metal wealth of the two provinces. The Company operates the Flin Flon copper-zinc mine which lies astride the Manitoba-Saskatchewan boundary, a concentrator, a copper smelter and a zinc plant at Flin Flon in Manitoba and three small mines near Flin Flon. The larger part of the Flin Flon orebody lies in Saskatchewan. Base-metal production also comes from the nickel-copper property of Sherritt Gordon Mines Limited at Lynn Lake in northern Manitoba.

Uranium moved into second place, next to copper, in value of output in Saskatchewan in 1956. Production was valued at \$24,292,000, just double that of 1955 and only \$3,300,000 less than the total value of copper produced. Output comes from the Beaverlodge area in the northern part of the Province from the operations of the area's first producer, Eldorado Mining and Refining Limited which started production in April 1953; from Gunnar Mines Limited in St. Mary's Channel section; and from several smaller operations, including those of Lorado Uranium Mines Limited which operates a custom mill in the area. Eldorado carried out extensive underground development and expanded its mill capacity from 750 tons to 2,000 tons daily, of which 150 tons has been allocated to the treatment of custom ores. Gunnar, which entered production in 1955, increased its mill capacity from 1,250 tons to 1,650 tons. Mining is by open-pit methods but the Company is preparing for eventual underground operations and it is hoped that before the open pit is finished all mill feed during the severest winter months will come from underground. Lorado commenced treatment of its own and custom ores in its new 500-ton mill in April 1957. The Company plans to proceed almost immediately with the expansion of the plant to 750 tons. Lorado has contracts with Cayzor Athabaska Mines Limited, St. Michael Uranium Mines Limited, Lake Cinch Mines Limited, National Explorations Limited and Black Bay Uranium Limited. Rix-Athabasca Mines Limited continued to ship its ore to Eldorado for treatment.

Nickel production in Manitoba continued to come from the Sherritt Gordon nickel-copper mine at Lynn Lake. Despite the fact that sales of nickel concentrate in 1956 were lower than in 1955, the Company experienced its best production year in 1956 (1955 figures in brackets) with an output of 19,240,000 (16,667,000) lb. of nickel, 9,000,000 (10,156,000) lb. of returnable copper in concentrate, 107,000 (16,000) lb. of cobalt and 71,000 (55,000) tons of ammonium sulphate. Nickel concentrates from the Lynn Lake mine are treated in the Company's chemical metallurgical plant at Fort Saskatchewan, 15 miles northeast of Edmonton in Alberta. Copper concentrates are shipped to Noranda Mines Limited in Quebec for treatment.

Manitoba's nickel-producing potential was greatly increased with the announcement by International Nickel to proceed with the development of its Mystery Lake-Moak Lake property in the northern part of the Province. The project involves the expenditure of \$175,000,000 to develop two new nickel mines, Thompson and Moak Lake, and related surface plants, the construction of a 30-mile branch rail line from Sipiwesk on the CNR near Thicket Portage and a 22-mile Company-owned rail line between Thompson and Moak Lake, and certain installations in the new town of Thompson which is expected to have an initial population of 8,000. This project and the continued expansion in the Company's Sudbury area facilities are expected to raise Company production to 385,000,000 lb. of nickel a year, an increase of 100,000,000 lb. over output in 1956. Production at the Thompson and Moak Lake mines is expected to start in 1960 and to reach capacity in 1961.