

Ancillary to these principal duties the Board is empowered to undertake research and investigations with respect to:—

- (1) the systems and methods of mining coal;
- (2) the problems and techniques of marketing and distributing coal;
- (3) the physical and chemical characteristics of coal produced in Canada with a view to developing new uses therefor;
- (4) the position of coal in relation to other forms of fuel or energy available for use in Canada;
- (5) the cost of production and distribution of coal and the accounting methods adopted or used by persons dealing in coal;
- (6) the co-ordination of the activities of Government Departments relating to coal;
- (7) such other matters as the Minister may request or as the Board may deem necessary for carrying out any of the provisions or purposes of the Act.

In addition the Dominion Coal Board Act provides authority in the event of a national fuel emergency to ensure that adequate supplies of fuel are made available to meet Canadian requirements.

Assistance by transportation subventions, which have been maintained in varying degrees during the past 28 years, was designed to further the movement of Canadian coals by equalizing as far as possible the laid down costs of Canadian coals with imported coals. As these costs and the conditions of the coal industry are subject to variation, the Board has to review from time to time the rates of subvention and the areas where the assistance is required. The subventions in respect of the various Canadian coals are authorized by Orders in Council and are paid from moneys voted by Parliament for the purpose from year to year. During the year ended Mar. 31, 1957, a total of 3,321,614 tons were shipped under subvention and \$9,115,082 was paid in assistance.

As agent to the Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys, the Board has continued to handle application for loans under the Maritime Coal Production Assistance Act (R.S.C. 1952, c. 179) and administer the loans granted thereunder. The Board has also continued to administer payment under the Canadian Coal Equality Act (R.S.C. 1952, c. 34) which provides a subsidy on Canadian coal used in the manufacture of coke for metallurgical purposes. In the fiscal year 1956-57, 685,973 tons were bonused at a cost of \$339,556.

The Dominion Coal Board has maintained a continuous review of Canada's energy requirements. In view of the growing impact of oil and natural gas on the markets for Canadian coal,* the Board and its staff have intensified the study of the relation of the competing sources of energy and of possible new outlets for the solid fuel, especially in the field of thermal power.

The Board, since its inception, has worked toward the co-ordination of the activities of various government departments and other bodies relating to coal. On the matter of technical research as related to marketing and distributing coal, the Board has maintained close liaison with the Division of Fuels of the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys. Dominion-provincial conferences on coal research have been held annually since 1949 for the purpose of co-ordination and exchange of ideas.

Government purchases of fuel which constitute an important growing outlet for coal has claimed a greater amount of the Board's time. The Interdepartmental Committee on Fuel, set up in the past to co-ordinate and advise on the purchase and supply of fuel to Armed Services, has remained active. Furthermore, the Dominion Fuel Committee, which was organized in 1956 along similar lines as an advisory body to other government departments, has already demonstrated the value of the establishment of this group.

In a wider sphere the Chairman of the Board has met annually with the Coal Policy Committee of the Provincial Ministers of Mines and the Board has given consideration to recommendations made by the latter body relating to coal. The Board has also kept contact with trade and other associations concerned with the various phases of the Canadian coal industry in order to foster better mutual understanding of governmental and private endeavour. It has generally constituted a central agency through which representations may be made to the Government.

* See pp. 510-515.