

CHAPTER XI.—MINES AND MINERALS

CONSPECTUS

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NOTE.—The interpretation of the symbols used in the tables throughout the Year Book will be found facing p. 1 of this volume.

Section 1.—Canada's Mineral Industry 1957-58*

Canada's mineral industry attained a record value of production in 1957. The total of \$2,190,322,392 represented a gain of \$105,400,000 over that of the previous year, though the increase was far less than those of other postwar years. In any event, 1957 brought many vital achievements. Important mineral discoveries were made, newly constructed rail lines linked several mining communities with civilization, advances in technology pointed the way to improved procedures in mining and milling and, generally speaking, the year was one of continued growth and development for the mineral industry. Nevertheless, trouble spots appeared as 1957 drew to a close. A substantial drop occurred in the demand for copper, lead and zinc, bringing severe declines in their market prices and forcing a number of base-metal mines to close and others to abandon development programs. In 1958 the United States, the industry's most important customer, imposed a 1.7-cent-a-pound duty on copper imports and severe quotas on imports of lead and zinc. For nickel, the era of premium prices came to an end and, by March 1958, the country's leading producer had cut back production. The petroleum industry also faced a marketing problem when the United States instituted oil import quotas on its west coast refineries. Asbestos miners were faced with a recession on one side of the Atlantic and stepped-up competition from producers abroad. As a result, the value of Canada's total mineral production for 1958 fell 3 p.c. behind that of the previous year.

However, despite its difficulties, the industry showed encouraging signs of strength. Uranium production, valued at \$45,700,000 in 1956, soared to \$136,000,000 in 1957 and to an estimated \$290,000,000 in 1958. Natural gas output expanded as pipelines brought the fuel to more Canadian communities. In fact, most companies looked ahead to better times. In northern Manitoba a major program was under way in 1957 and 1958 to bring new nickel mines into production. Dozens of companies were carrying out exploration

* The introduction and Subsection 1 of this Section were prepared under the direction of Dr. Marc Boyer, Deputy Minister of the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys, by John W. MacLeod of the Editorial and Information Division.