

CHAPTER XV.—CAPITAL EXPENDITURES, CONSTRUCTION AND HOUSING*

CONSPECTUS

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

This Chapter, in addition to including a special article relating to the significance of construction activity in the economic life of the nation, provides data on the capital expenditures made by all sectors of the Canadian economy on construction and on machinery and equipment, together with summaries of other available statistics for the construction industry. Section 1 describes the purpose of capital expenditures and shows the amounts spent by each of the various industrial or economic sectors. Section 2 brings together a number of summaries of related series on construction activity—value of work performed by type of structure, value of materials used, salaries and wages paid and numbers employed, contracts awarded and building permits issued. Government aid to house-building and construction of dwelling units are covered in Section 3.

THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY IN CANADA†

Construction activity in Canada is completely interwoven with the social fabric of the economy. Its demands are created by all other industries and it serves a widely heterogeneous pattern of economic activity. Manufacturers and commercial interests call upon the construction industry to provide facilities for the housing of equipment and machinery and for the storage of commodities. Transportation service industries call upon it to provide roads, railways, harbours, airfields and telecommunication facilities. The mining industry calls upon it to provide processing plants and townsite developments. In turn, communities call upon it to provide social institutions, housing and other related service facilities. In general, the health of the construction industry is basic to the welfare and progress of the community and, conversely, the progress of the community is basic to the prosperity of the construction industry.

Because of the intimate complexity of construction demands, it is at times difficult to differentiate between construction activity and what may be classed as other types of activity. With the increase of off-site prefabrication and the assembly of building parts in factories or in suppliers' yards and shops, the lines of demarcation between construction activity and goods manufacture and distribution are rather obscure, yet the activities of

* Except where otherwise noted, prepared in the Operations Section, Business Finance Division, Dominion Bureau of Statistics.

† Prepared by Wm. J. H. Purcell, Economics Branch, Department of Trade and Commerce, Ottawa.