

Ontario imports moderate quantities of natural gas from the United States, and in 1961 received 5,580,000 Mcf., nearly the same as in 1960. In the Canadian market, where total natural gas sales were 358,550,000 Mcf., Alberta remained the largest consumer with sales of 137,560,000 Mcf., 38.4 p.c. of total sales in Canada. Ontario has been gaining rapidly in the provincial distribution of total sales; in 1961 Ontario sales were 119,620,000 Mcf., 33.4 p.c. of the Canadian market. Sales in other provinces, on a percentage basis, were: Saskatchewan 9.5 p.c., British Columbia 7.5 p.c., Quebec 6.9 p.c., and Manitoba 4.3 p.c. New Brunswick has been a very minor producer of natural gas for many years and consumes much less than 1 p.c. of total sales.

Subsection 4.—Coal*

High production and transportation costs and the ever-increasing competition from oil and gas continued to have a depressing effect on Canada's coal mining industry in 1960 despite a small increase in production. An increase in exports took up part of the production increase and continued assistance by governments made it possible for Canadian coals to compete with other fuels in markets where, because of unfavourable geographical locations with respect to energy markets, such competition would not be possible. Nevertheless, the over-all consumption of coal was down more than 5 p.c.

Mechanization of the mines continued to increase in all areas in Canada in an effort to decrease production costs. Of particular significance are the full-scale trials with fully mechanized retreating long walls in Nova Scotia where normally extraction is by long wall advancing; the use of a caterpillar-mounted Borecut mining machine of Canadian design and manufacture and the 3 JCM Joy Room Miner in mining operations under generally unfavourable conditions for mechanization in Western Canada; and the continued experimentation with long wall extraction using a mechanical miner in the thin coal seam of the Minto coalfield of New Brunswick. For strip-mining, larger size earth-moving equipment was put in use and orders placed for draglines with 33 cu. yard buckets which are expected to substantially increase the depth at which profitable strip-mining can be carried on. The increase in mine mechanization with relative absence of selective mining, combined with the tendency of the machines to produce greater quantities of fine coal, increased the problems associated with quality control at the surface.

There was little or no increase in coal cleaning facilities in Eastern Canada. However more extensive use of present cleaning equipment, employment of thermal drying, and increased coal sampling and analyses resulted in greater customer satisfaction with coal from mines of Eastern Canada. In Western Canada, particularly in the Crownsnest area, fine coal cleaning gained particular attention resulting in upgrading of these coals to meet demands of the export market for coking coals.

In 1959, the Federal Government appointed a Royal Commission on Coal to investigate the industry's problems and make recommendations for their solution. The Commission conducted hearings across Canada and published its findings in September 1960. One of the recommendations of the Commission was that subsidies be paid, with certain stipulations, directly to coal mine operators instead of to the carrier in the form of freight subventions, as at present. Recommendations for increased research in production, utilization and marketing were also contained in the report.

Assistance to the coal industry was given by the federal and provincial governments through research programs in co-operation with industrial organizations. The problem of fine coal production and disposal received much attention and research was directed toward improved mining methods and beneficiation by cleaning and briquetting. Development of new and modified combustion equipment was continued with greater efficiency in the use of Canadian coals in view. Through continued programs of sampling and analysis of marketable coal, the governments aided the industry in their efforts to maintain quality control. Surveys were made of the coking properties of coals in relation to their preparation for export markets and their use in prospective steel industries.

*This review covers the year 1960.