

coal has been much less than is desirable. We have enormous supplies of coal in the East and West. It is unfortunate that we are not using them to better advantage.

Asbestos mining has been carried on with good results during the year. The demand for sulphuric acid has been reflected by great activity at the pyrites mines in Quebec and Ontario.

There has been a good demand during the year for such minerals as graphite, fluorspar, chromite, feldspar and magnesite. The great consumption of oil is encouraging operators to explore new territory.

There has been during the year a greater appreciation of the fact that our basic industries are of vital importance during the war and it seems likely that efforts to increase production will meet with more than usual encouragement in the coming year.

THE MISLEADING REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC PRINTING.

As our readers are well aware, the United States Geological Survey has been sending out a very large number of reports on mineral deposits during the past year. There never was a time when these reports were more useful. In view of the facts is it not surprising that the Committee on Public Printing reported to the House in part as follows:

"Economy will have to be Canada's watchword for many years to come, and the printing bills of Parliament and the Public Departments present a fertile field for action in this regard. That our great neighbors to the South realize this in connection with Congressional publications is shown by the decision of the Senate of the United States to cut down this year its printing bills by \$470,000. This has been brought about by reducing the bulk of some reports and suspending entirely the publication of others. Among the latter may be mentioned:—Monthly Summary of Foreign Commerce, Annual Report of Foreign Commerce and Navigation, Report of District of Columbia Health Office, Bulletins of the Bureau of Ethnology, annual report, ditto; Bulletins of the Bureau of Fisheries, Geological Bulletins, Geological Professional papers, Geological Water Supply papers, Memoirs of the National Academy of Sciences, Nautical Almanac, Annual report of the Bureau of Soils and many others."

It is quite true, as we have pointed out before in these columns, that there is waste in Public Printing; but it is just as true that this Committee completely distorted the facts. No such measure as the Committee referred to is in operation in the United States. A bill providing for decrease in allotment for printing did pass in the Senate; but that measure did not aim to suspend the publication of the reports mentioned; but provided only that the Congressional edition should be discontinued. That is, members of Congress were not to be given copies for distribution; but the regular distribution by departments was to be continued.

Even this proposal failed to pass the House and is not in operation. Under the circumstances the report of the Committee was very misleading and little nearer the truth than other statements of the Committee to which we referred in our last number.

In the December 1 issue of "Engineering and Mining Journal" there is an excellent article on flotation patent litigation in the United States. The author, Mr. R. C. Canby, is thoroughly conversant with the subject and writes with authority. His article should be carefully read. It is not likely that Canadians will have to study this matter so carefully as have our American friends; but they will find Mr. Canby's article very enlightening.

In Canada it seems probable that litigation between flotation patent owners and mining companies will be avoided by Government action. If it should be proved that the Minerals Separation corporations are controlled by Germans, our American friends will also be relieved of a burden. In any event we expect that Canadian mining companies will be able to avoid costly litigation and unreasonable royalties.

It is unfortunate that in order to have the matter of our mineral resources more carefully considered, we had to include Mr. Mackenzie in our criticism of the Munition Resources Commission. Mr. Mackenzie is a member and secretary of the Munition Resources Commission and he naturally resents what we have said about the folly of asking the Commission to undertake work for which it is not qualified. Mr. Mackenzie would be a valuable member of a Committee on War Minerals, but that does not mean that the Munition Resources Commission is a competent Committee on War Minerals. The members of that Commission would probably undertake anything, if Mackenzie would offer to do the work, that would help to win the war; but that does not mean that good results would be obtained.

The necessary men for a real War Minerals Committee are available and the machinery is in good working order. Mr. Mackenzie showed good spirit in undertaking this work and merits praise rather than criticism for his part in it. It is, however, an unnecessary burden and the Commission should be glad to get rid of it. As a member of a real War Minerals Committee Mr. Mackenzie could well present the views of the Commission.

There is, of course, something in what Mr. Mackenzie says about the possibility that good will result from these circulars, for the unearthing of information that would lead to the operation of even one property is worth considerable effort. We hope that some such result may be obtained; but we believe that much more might be done by a properly qualified committee which would use the machinery that exists, instead of creating new machinery for every new idea.