

\$153,192,527,000 IN CHEQUES: Cheques cashed in 52 clearing centres across Canada had a total value of \$153,192,527,000 last year, a 7.5% increase over the 1953 value of \$142,533,068,000, the Dominion Bureau of Statistics reports. December cashings were worth over 10% more than a year earlier at \$14,242,143,000 against \$12,903,321,000.

The value of cheques cashed in December was higher than in 1953 in all economic regions except the Atlantic Provinces, where the total was down about 3% to \$374,980,000 from \$387,271,000.

The only economic region to show a decrease in the value of cheques cashed in the 12 months was the Prairie Provinces, where the aggregate fell 3.5% to \$24,155,325,000 from the 1953 value of \$25,019,281,000.

HOUSING JUMP: Preliminary figures for 1954 indicate that National Housing Act lending activity during the year exceeded activity in 1953 by about 67% in dollar volume and 39% in total number of housing units, Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation reported February 1.

Total NHA commitments for the 12 months of 1954 amounted to \$485,457,915 for 41,945 loans and 53,515 housing units an increase of \$195,141,813 over 1953 when 26,509 loans were made for 38,548 housing units.

The 1954 activity also exceeded the previous annual record of \$284,487,000 for 33,934 loans and 42,280 housing units, set in 1950.

CRUDE PETROLEUM: Crude petroleum production in Canada during last October amounted to 8,720,919 barrels, down from 8,864,074 in September but up sharply from 7,237,219 barrels in October 1953. Output in the ten months ending October aggregated 78,134,049 barrels, nearly 20% above the total of 65,224,729 barrels in the like 1953 period. Natural gasoline output (not included in the foregoing figures) rose to 64,649 barrels in October compared to 52,376 a year earlier, and in the ten months totalled 539,412 against 483,128 barrels.

NATURAL GAS RISE: Canadian production of natural gas rose sharply last October to 10,224,422 M cubic feet as compared to 8,153,476 M cubic feet in October 1953, bringing the output for the first ten months of 1954 to 95,908,062 M cubic feet as against 78,442,388 M cubic feet in the corresponding 1953 period. Alberta accounted for 85,276,385 M cubic feet of last year's ten-month total (69,674,379 in 1953).

Department store sales increased 7.3% during the week ending January 15 as compared with the corresponding week last year.

HONG KONG MEMORIAL: The names of 228 Canadian soldiers who have no known graves have been recorded on a memorial to be unveiled at Saiwan Bay Cemetery in Hong Kong on February 20, it was announced Jan. 31 at Army Headquarters.

The memorial will bear the names of more than 2,000 Commonwealth servicemen who died during the siege of Hong Kong just over 13 years ago. Their graves have never been located.

AMENDMENT DEFEATED: By a vote of 204 to 23, the House of Commons, on February 2, defeated the CCF proposed amendment to the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. Liberals, Progressive Conservatives and Social Credit members voted solidly against the motion, which would have criticized the Government for returning to the "policy of uncontrolled and unplanned private enterprise which resulted in the depression and unemployment of the pre-war years". . . .

WHEAT SUPPLIES: Visible supplies of Canadian wheat in store or in transit in North America totalled 358,709,000 bushels on January 19, a slight increase over the preceding week's total of 355,755,000, but appreciably below the 378,780,000 bushels reported a year earlier. Overseas export clearances during the week amounted to 3,207,000 bushels as against 2,792,000 in the week ending January 20 last year, and in the August 1 - January 19 period of the current crop year totalled 106,644,000 bushels as against 105,705,000 a year earlier.

During the week ending January 19, Prairie farmers marketed 5,346,000 bushels of wheat, considerably less than the 8,656,000 marketed in the preceding week but substantially more than the 3,836,000 marketed in the corresponding week last year.

INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION UP: Canada's composite index number of industrial production for November stood at 254.9, up 1.7% from 250.6 a year earlier, according to preliminary calculations. This was the second successive month in which the corresponding 1953 index was exceeded. For the first 11 months of 1954 the index averaged 245.2, slightly less than 2% below the same period of 1953.

Deliveries of oil through Canadian pipe lines in November amounted to 14,512,246 barrels, down from October's 14,824,697 barrels, but up 12% from 1953's November total of 12,918,411 barrels. This brought cumulative deliveries for the January-November period to 156,140,795 barrels, up 17% from 132,904,219 a year earlier.