

ENGINEERING INSTITUTE ANNUAL: Banff National Park in the scene this week of the Annual Meeting of the Engineering Institute of Canada.

Delegates from all parts of Canada are taking part in the scientific discussions of particular importance at this time. These include problems of scientific management, water and forest conservation, hydro development, irrigation projects, flood control, highway engineering, rural electrification, community planning, electronics, pulp and paper, and related matters.

One of the most important items on the agenda deals with the conservation measures being planned for the east slope of the Canadian Rockies. A paper on this subject is being delivered by General Howard Kennedy, Chairman of the Eastern Rockies Forest Conservation Board.

Several medals for notable contributions to the development of Canada will be presented during the course of the Conference. Dr. G. S. Hume, Chief of the Geological Survey of Canada, Department of Mines and Resources, is to receive the Leonard Medal for his paper, "Results and Significance of Drilling Operations in the Athabaska Bituminous Sands".

HYGIENE LABORATORY HEAD: James Gibbard of Highland Park has been promoted by the Civil Service Commission to head the Laboratory of Hygiene in the Department of National Health and Welfare the Minister, Hon. Paul Martin, announced June 4.

A member of the federal civil service for 20 years, Mr. Gibbard served first as a chemist-bacteriologist and later as senior bacteriologist in the Laboratory of Hygiene. In January, 1946, he was appointed assistant chief of the Laboratory and has been its acting head since the resignation of Dr. R. J. Gibbons.

SECURITIES TRANSACTIONS: Sales of securities by residents of Canada to buyers in other countries in March, were approximately equal to purchases from other countries, the transactions in each case aggregating \$15,600,000, according to the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. Sales increased by \$2,600,000 from the previous month and purchases increased by \$100,000. During the first quarter of 1948, net purchases from all countries totalled \$5,100,000, representing a continuation of the general trend of 1947 which resulted in a purchase balance of \$18,000,000 in the year's transactions.

Transactions with the United States in March resulted in a sales balance for the first time since October 1947. The balance was not large, amounting to \$600,000, and was due principally to sales of new Canadian bond issues floated in Canada. Transactions in outstanding bond issues and in common and preferred stocks resulted in a small purchase balance of \$400,000.

The volume of trade with the United Kingdom in March was the largest in any month since September 1947. The purchase balance of \$500,000 was principally due to repurchases of Canadian provincials and municipals and Canadian stocks. In transactions with other countries, sales and purchases each amounted to \$200,000.

COST-OF-LIVING INDEX: The Dominion Bureau of Statistics cost-of-living index, on the base 1935-39=100, rose from 151.6 for April 1 to 153.3 for May 1, with substantial increases for meats and vegetables accounting for a major proportion of the advance. A year ago the index was 133.1. From August 1939 to May 1 this year the cost-of-living index has advanced 52.1 per cent.

The food index mounted from 186.8 on April 1 to 191.2; apart from meats and vegetables, price changes were moderate with slightly lower citrus fruit quotations partially offsetting scattered advances in other food sub-groups. Increases for coal, coke and gas moved the fuel and light index from 121.3 to 122.7.

The rentals index rose from 119.9 to 120.9. Changes in clothing and home furnishings were small when compared with those of the past few months. The clothing index rose fractionally from 172.9 to 173.6, while advances and declines in the home furnishings and services group balanced, leaving this index at 161.9. The miscellaneous item index likewise remained unchanged at 122.9.

WHOLESALE PRICES: The weekly index number of industrial material prices, on the base 1926=100, continued to rise, moving from 150.1 for the week ending April 30 to 151.5 for the week ending May 28. Among the more important commodities to show increases were wool, structural shapes, coal, oats and livestock, while raw rubber and raw cotton were somewhat easier. The sharp rise, from 141.7 to 144.3, in the Canadian farm products index was due largely to increases in grains, potatoes, livestock, hides and wool. At the present level this index shows an advance of approximately 120 per cent over May, 1939.

RAILWAY OPERATIONS: Earnings from the operations of Canadian railways in March reached \$69,106,000; the highest March figure on record, according to figures released by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. The gain over March last year was 5.2 per cent. Freight revenues for the month were \$54,779,000 as compared with \$51,550,000, and passenger revenues totalled \$6,577,000 compared with \$6,353,000. Operating expenses amounted to \$60,857,000 as against \$55,703,000. The number of employees at 173,000, was up fractionally, while the total of all payrolls for the month was \$35,404,000 as against \$33,837,000.

Revenue freight carried reached 14,595,000 tons in March, a gain of 4.5 per cent or 632,000 tons over March last year to establish a new peacetime record for the month. The average length of haul was down from last year. Number of passengers carried receded from 3,478,000 to 3,308,000, but average passenger journey increased from 77 to 82 miles.

CARLOADINGS ON RAILWAYS: The disastrous floods in the Fraser Valley, having severed freight connections with the west coast for the first time in railway history, the present car loading report appears as a preliminary edition due to incomplete figures from the western lines of one system.

In the eastern division, 49,626 cars were loaded during the week compared with 53,090 in the preceding week and 54,269 in the week ending May 31, 1947. The cumulative total of loadings for the eastern division in the first 22 weeks was 1,085,830 cars, an increase of 61,711 cars or six per cent over the same period of 1947, due mainly to increases in loadings of coal, ores and products of the forest.

INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYMENT: Industrial employment in Canada at the beginning of April showed its fourth successive decline. The general contraction was seasonal in character, conforming to the pattern indicated in 21 of the 27 years during which monthly statistics have been compiled, but was rather above-average in extent. The index number of employment, based on 1926 as 100, fell from 188.9 at March 1 to 186.5 at April 1, when it was higher than at the same date in any earlier year of the record, exceeding by 3.2 per cent the index of 180.7 at April 1, 1947, previously the maximum for the early spring.

The weekly salaries and wages disbursed at April 1 by the leading firms furnishing returns in the eight major industrial groups aggregated \$75,322,239 as compared with \$77,192,239 disbursed by the same employers on or about March 1. The decrease, amounting to 2.4 per cent, was due in part to the decline in employment, and in part to the loss in working time occasioned by the observance of the Easter holidays.

Data were tabulated by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics from 18,686 of the larger employers in the eight major industrial divisions, whose staffs numbered 1,929,820 at the beginning of April; as compared with 1,954,410 at March 1, there was a decrease of 24,590 persons, or 1.3 per cent. Employment generally for workers of both sexes showed a slackening, the loss among men being particularly marked.

The most pronounced change in employment at April 1 as compared with March 1 was the large seasonal reduction of 25.6 per cent in logging.

MOTOR VEHICLES: Retail sales of new motor vehicles in April totalled 19,007 units, involving a total of \$36,165,000, according to the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. This was slightly lower than the sales made in March and there was also a reduction below April 1947 when 19,776 vehicles sold for \$33,468,000. Passenger car sales totalled 11,603 compared with 12,299 a year ago, while the number of commercial units sold was 7,404 compared with 6,877.

FRUIT CROP PROSPECTS: Reports of conditions at the middle of May in the fruit producing areas of Canada indicated that the spring in both the Maritimes and British Columbia had been cool and backward. In the Maritimes, while growth has been slow, fruit bud development in the orchards is promising. The early crop prospects for strawberries is generally good. Raspberry canes on the other hand show winter injury but the extent of the damage is not yet known.

The bloom in the apple orchards of Ontario and Quebec appears to be irregular with early winter varieties bearing the heaviest loads of bloom. Pear trees in western Ontario bloomed heavily except in the Peel-York and Georgian Bay areas. Other tree fruits were in full bloom or past the peak on May 15. The outlook for strawberries in both Ontario and Quebec is good. While raspberries wintered well in Quebec, some injury is reported in eastern Ontario.

Mid-May prospects for all fruit crops in British Columbia were good.

RADIO EXPERT TO OSLO: F. T. Davies, superintendent of the Radio Propagation Laboratories of the Defence Research Board, will attend the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics to be held at Oslo, Norway, August 17 to 27, it has been announced by the Minister of National Defence.

Other Canadian delegates will represent the National Research Council, the Department of Mines and Resources, the Dominion Observatory, the Meteorological Office, the Arctic Institute and Canadian universities. The Canadians will present 20 papers dealing with geophysics and related subjects.

While in Europe, Mr. Davies will also attend an International Radio Scientific Union meeting in Stockholm, Sweden, and scientific meetings in London.

At the same time it has been announced that J. C. W. Scott, of the Defence Research Board, has returned from Geneva, Switzerland, where he was scientific adviser to the Canadian delegation attending a meeting of the International Telecommunications Union. This conference, at which all major countries are represented, is engaged in allotting worldwide radio frequencies.