

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS: Production has moved upward throughout the first part of the year and prices which had shown signs of stabilizing in March rose again in April, according to the April issue of the Canadian Statistical Review just released by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. April's upsurge in department store sales may be due in part to the repayment of compulsory savings that occurred towards the end of March. Contracts for residential construction have continued at more than double last year's level.

Weekly carloading data indicate a further rise in industrial activity during April. Shipments of ores and concentrates and manufactured iron and steel products have been especially strong. In the iron and steel group, carloadings both of primary products and of autos, machinery and implements reached post-war peaks.

MARCH INDEX 182.9

The seasonally adjusted index of industrial production has continued to move gradually upward throughout the first quarter of 1948 and the index for March was 182.9, about 3.3 per cent higher than March 1947. The new plant and equipment constructed during the past two years and the increased employment that has accompanied it have both been factors in this rising trend. In manufacturing, where the index for March reached a new peacetime high of 194.2, activity based on iron and steel has been especially strong. Steel production for the month was over 286,000 tons and current output now exceeds the wartime peak. Automobile shipments showed a strong recovery from the interruptions caused by power shortages in the first two months of the year and March shipments were about five per cent above the 1947 high reached last October. Another heavy steel consumer, agricultural implements, is also expanding strongly and employment at March 1 was up more than 10 per cent over the last quarter of 1947.

Accompanying this growth in industrial production and employment throughout the early part of 1948 was a slightly higher level of unemployment. Unusually sharp seasonal declines in two industries, logging and building construction, are largely responsible for this development. Despite this small rise in unemployment, total employment was somewhat higher than a year earlier and in only one area did unemployment exceed five per cent of the total labour force. In the Maritimes, estimated unemployment in the week ending February 21 amounted to about 5.9 per cent of the labour force in that area; for Canada as a whole only slightly over three per cent of the labour force were unemployed.

Along with this larger production and increased employment there has been a renewed trend toward rising prices.

RCAF OF 1948: Speeding across Canada's skies in jet-propelled Vampire and fast four engine North Star aircraft, the RCAF of 1948 is emerging from its post-war re-organization as a streamlined service capable of serving Canada in peace and war, more than four times as large as in 1939 and capable of rapid expansion in the event of an emergency.

Today's RCAF has three main components, the RCAF Regular, with an established strength of 16,100 (manned to 75% in 1948); the RCAF Auxiliary, 15 squadrons (4,500 personnel); and the RCAF Reserve, a large and important pool of trained veterans.

Operational elements of the RCAF Regular which have been, are being, or will be formed, in the near future consist of: 1 Coastal Reconnaissance squadron (Lancaster), 2 Transport squadrons (North Star and Dakota), 1 Mobile Tactical Wing (Mitchell, Mustang, Dakota, Auster), 1 Interceptor Fighter Wing (Vampire) and 2 Photo Survey squadrons (Lancaster, Mitchell and Dakota), and a Search and Rescue organization.

2 GEOGRAPHICAL COMMANDS

Two geographical Commands cover Canada. Central Air Command with headquarters at Trenton, Ont. is responsible for the eastern section, and North West Air Command with headquarters at Edmonton, Alta., covers the western part of the country. Maintenance Command is responsible for functional duties of equipment, supply and construction in the RCAF, and Air Transport Command controls all Air Force transport operations.

Eighty-five per cent of the Regular force is made up of ground crew tradesmen, who receive training at Camp Borden, Aylmer, Clinton, Trenton, and Rockcliffe. Training is not confined to recruits but many of the wartime tradesmen have been re-mustered to other trades and are given refresher courses. In addition more than 2,500 airmen are at present taking correspondence courses to raise their academic standing, and "In Service" academic training at Aylmer, Ont., is bringing trainees up to matriculation standards in mathematics and science.

Aircrew training is now in full swing and flying schools are holding their first post-war wings parades this summer. Aircrew training is now confined to two groups - pilots and radio-navigators. Under a new plan, qualified high school graduates and airmen, selected from the ranks, train as aircrew, are commissioned upon graduation and then complete a six-year short service period as aircrew. Some are then selected for permanent commissions and the remainder are appointed to the Auxiliary or Reserve, with substantial gratuities. This scheme is aimed at keeping average age of aircrew at a low figure and furnishing a constant flow of trained personnel to the Auxiliary or Reserve Forces.

CANADA - U.S. - WEATHER STATIONS: Three United States ships -- a Navy icebreaker, a Coast Guard icebreaker and a Navy cargo ship -- will proceed to Canadian Arctic waters this summer to resupply the existing weather stations which, as previously announced, have been jointly established there by the Canadian and United States Governments and to reconnoitre sites for further weather stations to be jointly installed next year. Canadian representatives will participate in the expedition, it is announced by the Minister of Transport, Mr. Chevrier.

The ships will be commanded by Captain George J. Dufek, United States Navy, embarked in the U.S.S. "Edisto", icebreaker. Other vessels participating in the cruise will be the U.S.C.G. "Eastwind", icebreaker, and the U.S.S. "Wyandot", cargo vessel.

The primary purpose of the expedition is the resupply of the 4 weather stations that have been established at Slidre Fjord, Eureka Sound; Resolute Bay, Cornwallis Island; South-Eastern Prince Patrick Island; and Isachsen Peninsula, Ellef Ringnes Island.

Helicopters carried aboard the vessels will make short-range flights to assist in navigation through the ice pack.

The "Edisto" will be commanded by Commander E.C. Folger, United States Navy; the "Wyandot" by Captain J.D. Dickey, United States Navy, and the "Eastwind" by Captain J.A. Flynn, U.S.C.G.

BULGARIAN REQUIREMENT: The Department of External Affairs has been advised that a recent Bulgarian law for the nationalization of urban real estate requires that foreigners owning such property, should register by June 15, 1948, a declaration of ownership with the Municipal Peoples' Council of the municipality in which the property is located.

The Bulgarian law is understood to define urban real property, subject to nationalization, as property owned by private persons and corporations for which receipt of income from invested capital is obtained and which is situated within the limits of urbanization plans.

The Department of External Affairs is requesting an extension of the deadline for the registration of such declarations, but is unable to state whether favourable action will be taken by the Bulgarian authorities on this request.

BLOOD SERUM FOR B.C.: Two hundred and fifty bottles of dried blood serum, stored in Ottawa for emergency use, left here by plane June 4 for the flood-stricken areas of British Columbia.

Acting in response to an appeal from the blood transfusion service of the Canadian Red Cross Society, the shipment was prepared by the Laboratory of Hygiene of the Department of National Health and Welfare.

PRAIRIE GAS RESERVES: The Hon. James A. MacKinnon, Acting Minister of Mines and Resources announced June 3 that proven gas reserves in the Prairie Provinces total 1,433 billion cubic feet with a probable reserve estimated at an additional 2,250 billion cubic feet according to information provided in a report prepared by Dr. G.S. Hume, Geological Survey of Canada, and A. Ignatieff, Bureau of Mines.

The proven reserves are the fields that have had production history and calculations are made on the basis of the decline in pressure for volume of gas produced. Proven areas are Viking-Kinsella-Fabyan, Medicine Hat-Redcliff, Bow Island, Foremost, Brooks, Vermillion and Turner Valley. All of these fields are in the province of Alberta.

Probable reserves are the fields where gas has been indicated by the drilling of a certain number of wells and where sufficient data are available on which an appraisal may be made.

Potential reserves are those areas where gas is known to exist, but where insufficient information is available on which to make a calculation. Such reserves in Alberta are believed to be enormous.

RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION: The early spring break-up is reflected in increased activity in residential construction, the number of dwelling units completed in April being estimated at 6,729 units as compared with 4,055 in March, while construction was commenced on 8,273 units compared with 3,109. Comparable data for 1947 are available only for the urban centres with a population of 5,000 or more which account for about 85 per cent of the total completions in the first four months of 1948. For these areas, starts in the first four months of 1948 were about 40 per cent higher than in 1947, while completions were about 60 per cent higher.

The average length of time required to build the dwelling units completed in April was about 7.7 months and about one-fifth took longer than nine months to complete.

SUMMARY OF STRIKES: Time loss through work stoppages arising out of industrial disputes in Canada during the first four months of 1948 was 60 per cent less than that recorded for the same period in 1947, it was announced by Honourable Humphrey Mitchell, Minister of Labour, in issuing the monthly summary of strikes and lockouts for April, 1948.

Preliminary figures for April, 1948, show 16 strikes and lockouts, involving 4,491 workers, with a time loss of 49,396 man-working days, as compared with 14 strikes in March, with 3,725 workers involved and a time loss of 56,808 days. In April, 1947, there were 29 strikes, involving 17,988 workers, with a time loss of 365,687 days.