

POLYMER REPORT

Mr. C.M. Drury, Minister of Industry, who tabled recently the 1967 annual report of the operations of Polymer Corporation Limited, indicated that the company's net sales as well as other income, of synthetic rubber, latex and plastic manufacturer, had held steady during the year at \$128.9 million, while net income had declined to \$5.8 million. The total volume of production, he added, had reached 617 million pounds.

Polymer paid a dividend of \$3 million into the consolidated revenue fund.

Mr. Drury noted that the results were related not only to the effect of rising costs but to a slower growth in world rubber demand and further price declines for many of Polymer's products. He indicated that the devaluation of the pound had adversely affected the results of the last quarter.

Polymer's capital expenditures amounted to \$21.9 million in 1967, and the company absorbed start-up costs of three major plant facilities, including styrene and benzene operations in Sarnia, Ontario, and a general-purpose rubber plant at Strasbourg, France. Work began, and is progressing well, on expansion of latex facilities in Sarnia to produce latices for carpet, textile, paper and other industries. Also in Sarnia, expansion of Polymer's ABS plastic plant was completed and the new Applications Development Centre has begun a number of important programmes.

During 1967, Polymer for the first time undertook public financing, with an \$18-million debenture issue that provided the company with the means to reduce short-term indebtedness substantially and to build a sound financial base for future growth, while remaining within its borrowing capacity.

GROWTH PREDICTION

Mr. Drury indicated that the synthetic-rubber industry predicted growing demand and that, with its strong position in the industry, Polymer was in a good position to participate in the predicted growth. He noted that for some years the industry had operated in an environment of surplus world capacity with attendant downward pressure on prices.

The Minister stated that the company would also benefit from a successful cost effectiveness programme, a highly selective capital-spending programme, and an organization that would remain fully competitive in international markets.

NEW DEAL FOR INDIANS

Indian Affairs Minister Arthur Laing announced recently that the Indian people would be consulted about changes they desired in the Indian Act. The Minister circulated to Members of Parliament copies of a booklet designed to help Indians discuss questions which arise in amending the Act. A series of technical papers will be forwarded to the spokesmen of the various bands before they meet with Department officials at various locations across Canada late in April or early May.

Mr. Laing said that the provinces would also be consulted, since many of the changes being discussed had a direct bearing on their attitude to Indian reserve communities. "We have discussed the kind of changes the Indian people want with the Regional Indian Advisory Councils and the National Indian Advisory Board," the Minister said. "Now it is time to go to the Indian people and make certain that the changes being discussed are along the lines they want. We do not have any fixed views except that the Act should provide more scope and should not restrict the individual."

CHOOSING A PATH

The booklet, entitled *Choosing a Path* includes a message from the Minister, a statement of the objectives of the Government and comments on various parts of the Indian Act. It says the Government wants to repeal the sections relating to liquor unless the Indians themselves want these restrictive parts of the Act retained.

The Minister said that he had discussed the Indian Act with his Cabinet colleagues, and the Government had agreed to support an Act which would permit Indian bands to choose from a number of options the form of self-government that suited them best. "My colleagues have given preliminary approval to some other changes which might be made following consultation," Mr. Laing said, "but we must know the extent to which the Indian people themselves want changes, and the nature of the changes before we come up with a finished Bill. This will not be an Act imposed on the Indians. I suppose that no one will get everything he wants, but he will certainly be heard and if enough agree about specific points, you can be sure that we will pay close attention."

CARIBOU RETURN TO CAPE BRETON

The woodland caribou, which disappeared from Cape Breton Island, New Brunswick, about 43 years ago, is being brought back to Cape Breton Highlands National Park.

A small breeding herd of about 25, captured last month in Laurentides Provincial Park, Quebec, was flown to Sydney, Nova Scotia, and then sent by truck to Cape Breton. Finally, after being kept for possibly six weeks in a corral near Warren Lake, the animals will be released to make their new home in the lichen-rich barrens of the park interior.

Repopulation of the park with caribou has been studied for several years by the National Parks Service of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Since one of the purposes of national parks is to preserve wild animals in their natural environment, the Service had planned to restore the Cape Breton Park's caribou herd, which disappeared about 1924 as a result of hunting.

The Quebec Department of Tourism, Fish and Game agreed to provide the National Parks Service with a number of caribou from Laurentides Provincial Park, where they had been protected since 1897.