

CANADA-INDIA ZINC PLANT

A sale of Canadian capital equipment and engineering services for the construction of a zinc smelter and associated sulphuric-acid plant near Cochin, Kerala State, India, was announced recently by Mr. Mitchell Sharp, the Minister of Trade and Commerce. The buyer is Cominco Binani Zinc Limited, Calcutta, a joint-venture company set up by The Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company of Canada Limited, Montreal, and its associate, Metal Distributors Limited, Calcutta.

The Export Credits Insurance Corporation, Ottawa, will lend \$1,600,000 to cover part of the foreign-exchange costs of the \$12-million project. Repayment of the loan will be made over ten years following a five-year period of grace. The interest rate is 6 per cent.

Consolidated Mining, one of the world's largest producers of metallic zinc, has made a direct investment in the venture of almost \$2 million, part of which will be used to cover Canadian and other foreign purchases. It will also supply technical knowledge and design to the Indian enterprise. The remainder of the financing will be shared by Metal Distributors Limited, the Indian Government through its Industrial Finance Corporation, the Indian State of Kerala, and by the Indian public through a share issue.

The ECIC loan is being made out of the special credits committed by Canada under its contribution to the World Bank Aid India Consortium. This project has a very high priority in India's current Five-Year Plan, and will enable India to further its programme of increasing production and processing of non-ferrous metals.

TYPE OF EQUIPMENT

The Canadian equipment to be installed consists of all handling and processing equipment necessary for such individual operations as drying and roasting zinc concentrates, leaching the calcine, thickening the residue and filtering and purifying the solution, manufacturing cathodic zinc and cadmium by way of the electrolytic process, manufacturing by-product sulphuric acid from roaster gases, and casting of slabs of zinc and cadmium by melting cathodes, together with all ancillary equipment necessary,

including transformers, rectifiers, and waste-gas treatment facilities.

"On-site" work on the project has already commenced, and the completion target date is mid-1966. The plant will have a capacity for the production of 20,000 tons of zinc a year and 125 tons of sulphuric acid a day. The market for zinc in India is at present more than 60,000 tons a year, and this amount will have increased to over 100,000 tons by the time Cominco Binani is operating. The sulphuric-acid by-product will supply part of the demand of the large fertilizer plants at present in production or to be built shortly in India.

BUILDING PERMITS

Canadian municipalities issued building permits in March to cover construction estimated at \$205,645,000, an increase of 12.6 per cent from last year's March total of \$182,669,000. Following increases in January and February, the value of permits issued in the January-March period advanced 11.7 per cent, to \$490,083,000 from \$438,693,000 in the first quarter of 1963.

The value of residential construction covered by building permits issued in March rose 5.0 per cent, to \$97,942,000 from \$93,269,000 a year earlier, bringing the January-March total to \$232,046,000, up by 8.3 per cent from the corresponding 1963 total of \$214,246,000. Non-residential construction climbed 20.5 per cent in the month, to \$107,703,000 from \$89,400,000, and 15.0 per cent in the quarter, to \$258,037,000 from \$224,447,000.

PERMITS BY PROVINCE

The value of building permits issued in March was up in five provinces and down in five, compared to a year earlier. The month's totals (in thousands) were: Newfoundland, \$116 (\$272 in March 1963); Prince Edward Island, \$35 (\$72); Nova Scotia, \$1,222 (\$1,383); New Brunswick, \$1,890 (\$1,063); Quebec, \$45,127 (\$42,723); Ontario, \$103,749 (\$74,681); Manitoba, \$6,297 (\$6,538); Saskatchewan, \$3,688 (3,307); Alberta, \$23,066 (\$16,840); and British Columbia, \$20,455 (\$24,790).
