

## NEOPRENE

Use of neoprene in Canada is largely confined to oil-resistant belting, gaskets and washers, for which its properties make it suitable. Supplies of this synthetic are obtained from the United States, and importations will continue indefinitely, as long as needed. Both neoprene and neoprene latex are used for the making of rubber thread for many articles, such as children's underwear, surgical garments, elastic hose, women's foundation garments and so forth. Neoprene and neoprene latex were released for this purpose in October, 1944.

Before the Polymer plant came into production, buna-s, imported in small quantities from the United States, was used in experimental stages of synthetic rubber production in Canada. It was first used mid-way through 1943, in production of small quantities of synthetic tires for essential civilian vehicles under rationing restrictions. At this time the production of reclaim tires was discontinued.

Production at Polymer in the year ended September 29, 1944, comprised 58,000,000 pounds of buna-s and 2,000,000 pounds of butyl rubber. The original rated capacity was 74,800,000 of buna-s and 8,800,000 pounds of Butyl. The peak annual capacity, reached in May, 1944, was 88,000,000 pounds of buna-s and 5,060,000 pounds of butyl. The present rate of output is 78,000,000 pounds per year of buna-s and 9,000,000 pounds per year of butyl.

Approximately two-thirds of the synthetic rubber produced at the plant during the first year of operations was turned out in the last six months. To meet an urgent need, the output climbed rapidly during the autumn and winter of 1943-44 until it reached a peak annual rate of over 93,000,000 pounds in May, 1944. Thus the plant proved itself capable of producing at a rate 11% greater than its original rated capacity of 83,600,000 pounds.

## POLYMER PLANT

Rubber from the Polymer plant has literally kept Canada in the war. Its output, together with production from United States plants, all of which goes into the United Nations' pool, has supplied the armed forces of the allies with the necessary rubber and kept essential civilian needs supplied.

Polymer increased its output of ethyl-benzene beyond requirements needed for production of styrene to meet the demands for anti-knock blending agents in high-octane aviation gasoline. From May to September, 1944, the plant turned out about 1,500,000 pounds per month of surplus ethyl-benzene, a substitute for the cumene now produced at the plant for the same purpose.

When the war against Japan is won, demands for synthetic rubber may decline, but the plant is capable of turning out post-war by-products. It could make styrene, a plastic base, and butadiene, an elastomer base; and with minor alterations it could produce industrial alcohols, acetic and other acids and numerous other products.

The Polymer price for synthetic rubber was set in October, 1943, at 40.515 cents a pound f.o.b. destination in Canada. On June 1, 1944 the price was reduced to 35 cents including freight. This was further reduced