

BUILDING IN U. S. SHOWS REDUCTION

REPORT FOR HALF YEAR

Careful Summary by Straus & Co. Indicates Downward Tendency in Many Types of Bldg. Improvement

Official reports of building permits issued in 481 cities for the first half of 1927 were \$2,034,696,939, compared with \$2,245,030,070 in the same cities last year, a loss of \$210,333,131, or slightly more than 9 per cent. The same cities in June issued \$351,719,088 of building permits compared with \$411,051,351 in June, 1926, the loss being \$59,332,263, or nearly 15 per cent, according to the national monthly building survey of S. W. Straus & Co.

While it has been apparent that the official semi-annual records would reflect a pronounced slowing down in building activities, the somewhat spectacular falling off in permits issued for June was a surprise even to those in close touch with the industry. Shows Decrease

According to the figures submitted by the various municipal building departments of the United States to S. W. Straus & Co., there is less potential construction of various types of buildings in the country at present than there was in the mid-summer of 1924. At that time 50 less cities, then making regular reports to S. W. Straus & Co., showed \$30,000,000 more of permits issued than was reported for the first six months of 1927.

Only here and there do the official records show prospective construction of buildings on an equal basis with last year. Drastic losses almost everywhere prevail. For the six months period compared with the first half of 1926, New York lost \$22,000,000; Detroit, \$17,500,000; Cleveland, \$15,000,000; Washington, \$13,500,000; St. Louis, \$9,000,000; Philadelphia, \$8,500,000; San Francisco \$8,000,000; Los Angeles, \$5,000,000; and Baltimore, \$3,000,000. Chicago, notwithstanding a loss of more than \$3,000,000 in June, gained \$23,400,000 for the six months. The only other gains of importance were Milwaukee, \$5,000,000; Indianapolis, \$3,500,000; Portland, Ore., \$3,000,000; Louisville, \$1,700,000 and Columbus, \$1,500,000.

Downward Tendency
The persistent month-on-month filing of new building projects is to be accepted as a definite indication of

the general downward tendency in the building industry, according to the Straus survey, although the figures are not to be confused with those relating to the completion of work officially permitted in months gone by or for road building, public utility plants outside of incorporated cities, or public buildings for which permits are not issued. The significance of building permit records in the 481 leading cities of the country will be accepted for their barometric value by the constructive element in the industry with the hope of prolonging the present period of soundness and stability. Only harmful results can come from unfounded reports of inflation and boom-like conditions. It is not necessary, the Straus report concludes, for the industry to be in the midst of a constant "boom" in order to be sound and prosperous.

INCREASE NOTED IN ELECTRICITY USED

Report by Geological Survey on Product of Public Utility Plants

The monthly report of the production of electricity by public-utility power plants for May, issued by the Geological Survey, Department of the Interior, shows a total for the first five months of the year amounting to 32.4 billion kilowatt-hours, or about 9 1/2 per cent more than the output for the same period in 1926. An estimate based on the output so far this year and on comparable figures for 1926 indicates that the total output for 1927 will be in the neighborhood of 80 billion kilowatt-hours. The total for 1926 was 73.8 billion kilowatt-hours.

The effect of the increasing hours of daylight and the rising temperature from the first to the middle of the year on the demand for electricity for light and heat is shown in the decrease in the average daily production of electricity that occurs during this period each year. This year the decrease in the average daily output from January to May was about 3 per cent; in 1926 the decrease was about 5 per cent; in 1925, 6 per cent. The lessening of the decrease in 1927 may be due, in part, to the increasing load for electrical refrigeration.

The average daily production of electricity by the use of water power in 1927 has set a record in each month from March to May. As the amount of electricity produced by water power is directly dependent on the amount of water flowing in the streams used for the development of power, it is expected that the output will begin to decrease in the month of May, as March, April, and May are generally months of maximum

flow for streams in the United States. Notwithstanding the record-breaking output of petroleum this year, the consumption of fuel oil by public-utility power plants has decreased each month, and the consumption in May was less than in any other month since the Geological Survey began to publish monthly power reports in 1919.

COLORADO MINING DISTRICT NOTABLE

PRODUCES GREAT WEALTH

Country Around Leadville Has Mined Millions and Still Is Producing; Some Facts Noted

Mining men and others will be interested in a Geological Survey volume just issued by the Interior Department describing the mineral development and the geology of the great Leadville mining district of Colorado—Professional Paper 148.

During 1859 the great "Pikes Peak excitement" lured a continuous stream of emigrants westward, and while many of those whose wagons carried the triumphant device "Pikes Peak or bust" returned later with the device significantly altered to "busted," the more adventurous and hardy pioneers pushed resolutely up through the rocky gorges toward the sources of the streams. A few of them, early in 1860, found placer gold in the bed of California Gulch, which bounds the present city of Leadville on the south. In spite of the difficulties of communication in this wild region, news of the discovery spread with amazing rapidity, and by July there were about 10,000 people in the camp. It is said that \$2,000,000 worth of gold was taken out during this first summer. The peak of production was soon reached, however, and after the first year the population of this new district, then known as Oro City, rapidly decreased.

Vast Fortunes Overlooked
Lead carbonate with a high content of silver is said to have been found in the gold-bearing gravel as early as 1861 but was only a source of annoyance because it could not be readily separated from gold in the sluice boxes. In 1868 the first vein was discovered and produced gold, which was found in nests of lead carbonate. This and one or two other veins imparted a fitful prosperity to the district, which seemed to be one of the many small and insignificant produ-

cers of gold that abound in the western states. And in 1874 Oro City was almost deserted, and the site of the present city of Leadville was an unbroken wilderness.

If it had not been for the extensive experience of two men equipped with technical skill, it is quite probable that the region would soon have been entirely abandoned and the great bodies of silver-lead ore would have remained securely concealed to await the chance discovery of some future generation. These men, struck by the appearance of the "heavy rock" that annoyed the placer miners, identified it as silver-bearing lead carbonate and quietly prospected the wooded slopes that bordered the gulch. The first lead carbonate in place was found on Dome Hill in 1874, but none was mined until 1876. Production increased rapidly and in 1880 amounted to more than 66,000,000 pounds of lead and nearly 10,000 ounces of silver.

Studied District Years Ago
In 1880 one of the first undertakings of the newly organized United States Geological Survey was a study of the Leadville mining district. S. F. Emmons was placed in charge of this work, and his preliminary report on the district was issued in 1882. His complete report, which involved a vast amount of laboratory work and preparation of very detailed maps, was issued in 1886. It was known as the Leadville monograph and immediately gained recognition as a classic and as marking a new epoch in the science of mining geology. During the 40 years of intensive mining in the district that have elapsed since its publication this monograph and its maps have been a constant well of information to mining engineers and geologists and especially to local companies, who have called it their miner's Bible.

Mining developments in the district grew so rapidly that Emmons, on revisiting the district after some years, realized the need of a supplementary report and a little later decided that the extent of developments and the vast amount of data available justified a complete survey. He planned accordingly, but his administrative duties were so many that his progress with the survey was slow. In 1907 he wrote a bulletin on the "Downtown" area. This area had been discovered and developed since the issue

of his monograph and maps, which were of much aid in the direction of this new work.

By 1911 he had made a great deal of progress with the survey but had made only rough fragmentary drafts of parts of his report when he died. It developed upon Prof. John D. Irving, of Yale university, who had been Emmons' assistant during much of the survey, to carry on the work, but Irving's duties at Yale required the major part of his time, and continued developments in the district made it increasingly difficult to complete the report. A rough draft of most of the report, however, had been made by 1917, before Irving left with the American Expeditionary forces for France, where he lost his life.

The work was then taken up by G. F. Loughlin, who had studied the newly discovered deposits of zinc carbonate in 1913 and had submitted a report on them. Further field studies were necessary as late as 1925 before the report was completed.

Name a Misnomer
After the issue of the original monograph in 1886, important discoveries of lode gold were made about 1890, of zinc sulphide about 1897, and of zinc carbonate in 1911. In spite of the name Leadville, lead has never been preeminent in value in the district's output. After the millions of gold had been taken out silver was the big product until 1903, when it was surpassed by zinc, which has exceeded all the other metals ever since, except in 1922 and 1923, when the zinc market was very dull and silver again became the ranking metal in value. Copper and manganese have contributed annually to the total production, and small amounts of bismuth have been produced intermittently.

Leadville has been hard hit at different times by miners' strikes and industrial depressions, but its most severe depression has been since the World war. Dull markets coupled with labor troubles caused the closing and flooding of some of the most productive mines, which have been reopened only after long, expensive campaigns of unwatering. It is also quite unlikely that such an old district, which has been so thoroughly prospected and has produced a total value of more than \$435,000,000 to the end of 1926, will again attain production figures comparable with those of its most prosperous years, but

study of the local mining geology leaves the conviction that, besides the vast amounts of mixed sulphide ore that have been awaiting profitable methods of treatment, considerable quantities of ore remain to be discovered within the heart of the district, and some of the outlying territory is worthy of careful attention.

As mining developments have progressed, geology has become increasingly important in the finding of ore. The new report on the geology and ore deposits of the Leadville district, published as Professional Paper 148 of the Geological Survey, contains a detailed account of the stratigraphic and structural geology, the history of mining developments, statistics of production, mineralogy, character and origin of the ore deposits, and factors controlling their distribution and closes with a chapter on ore reserves. It is accompanied by a number of large-scale geologic maps of different parts of the district.

A short report, omitting detailed descriptions and containing only a few illustrations, was issued a year ago as Bulletin 779, entitled "Guides to ore in the Leadville district, Colorado." This short report is recommended to those interested in ore hunting but not necessarily in the geology of the district. Professional Paper 148 and Bulletin 779 may be obtained from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., for \$2.50 and 35 cents respectively.

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