

Continental Can Sales Set Record at \$554 Million

Continental Can Co.'s sales reached a new top of \$554,436,982 last year, and the company's net earnings, after taxes, were at a record level of \$15,680,953, according to the annual report.

The sales total exceeded 1952's by \$77,552,367 or 16%. Of this increase, approximately one-third came from sales of companies acquired by Continental during the year.

Last year's record, however, was hurt by the strike in December of the United Steel Workers of America, C.I.O., according to a joint statement by Lucius D. Clay, chairman of the board, and Hans A. Eggers, president.

This strike shut down operations in about 30 of the company's plants and resulted in a loss of substantially more than half of the productive capacity from Dec. 2 to Jan. 5. It cost approximately \$5 million and reduced the substantial improvement in earnings before taxes effected during the first 11 months of the year, the statement said.

In spite of the strike, earnings before income taxes amounted to \$31,430,953 compared with \$27,767,839 in 1952. This improvement in earnings over 1952 resulted from an increase of \$4.9 million in net operating income.

About \$25 million will be spent by the company on capital improvements in 1954. This will include completion of a new can plant at Omaha, Neb., a substantial addition to the metal plant at Denver, Colo., enlargement of the flexible packaging plant at South Gate, Calif., a new paper container plant at Calgary, Alta., Canada, and additional warehouses at several locations.

Installation of bark-burning equipment at Hopewell, Virginia, will complete a major expansion of the company's paper mill. New production lines at several locations also are being planned to meet increasing customer requirements, particularly for beer, carbonated beverage and frozen concentrate cans, paper cups, polyethylene packaging, and fiber drums for liquids.

Gross capital expenditures totaled \$33,109,193 for the year. These expenditures included cost of erecting a new metal can plant at Winter Garden, Fla., machinery installations in new plants at Pittsburg, Calif., and Vancouver, B. C., and warehouse additions at Malden, Mass., Harvey, La., and Tampa, Fla.

During the year, the company acquired several firms engaged in the

packaging field, including the Benjamin C. Betner Co. of Devon, Pa., and the flexible packaging business of Shellmar Products Corp. of Mt. Vernon, Ohio. These operations were combined to form the company's new Shellmar-Betner Flexible Packaging Division, which operates seven converting plants and one polyethylene extrusion and laminating plant.

Other acquisitions during 1953 were the Elmer E. Mills Corp., producer of polyethylene bottles, pipe and other molded plastic products, Bowes Industries, Inc., manufacturer of plastic-coated paper plates, and Perga Containers, Ltd., of Hamilton, Ont., manufacturer and distributor of paper milk containers for the Canadian market.

A. E. Staley Reports 9% Declines in 53 Sales

A. E. Staley Mfg. Co. reports a 1953 net profit of \$4,424,214 on sales of \$130,463,700. This was about 24% above the 1952 earnings of \$3,572,314. Earnings per share of common stock amounted to \$2.45, compared with \$1.96 in 1952.

Net sales volume was 9% below the 1952 total of \$142,496,484, primarily because of adverse relationships between the cost of soybeans and the market price of finished soybean products.

A. E. Staley, Jr., president and board chairman, reported that other divisions of the company operated at satisfactory levels. Demand for corn division products was good, the expanded oil refinery processed 21% more oil, and sales of the chemical derivatives division were up 17%.

Commenting on the 1954 business outlook, Staley said the company, with the exception of its soybean division, should operate at a satisfactory level this year if the nation's industrial activity continues at its present level. He said there was also a possibility the soybean division operation would improve.

The 1953 corn harvest of 3,176,615,000 bushels, third highest in U. S. history, should be more than adequate to meet feeding, industrial, and export demand, according to Staley, but soybean supplies for the crop year beginning Oct. 1, 1953, are from 10 to 15% below the previous crop year.

Pointing out that drought cut 1953 soybean production to 262,341,000 bushels, compared to 298,052,000 bushels in 1952, he said supplies available for domestic processing have been further reduced by heavy soybean exports.

These exports totaled 25 million bushels by the end of 1953, compared with 14 million in the comparable period of 1952.

The company's expenditures for new construction during the year totaled \$2,136,625, compared with \$4,425,988 in 1952. Major construction projects were conversion of a soybean expeller plant into a feed mixing plant, installation of equipment to make the sirup refinery more flexible, and expansion of the oil refinery.

Agricultural Chemicals Market Stabilized, Says Pittsburgh Coke

Pittsburgh Coke & Chemical told stockholders in its annual report that many of the problems of the agricultural chemicals industry have been resolved and that the market has now become satisfactorily stabilized. The report said that many of these problems were those that usually accompany any new and rapidly growing industry.

The company said that during the year a number of improvements were made in the production of agricultural chemicals, resulting in a lowering of production costs and raising of quality. Primary efforts, however, were directed to strengthening and improving the agricultural chemicals division's market position and it is believed that a strong merchandising organization has been established. No financial details on the operations of this division were reported.

The company reported earnings of \$2,855,000 on sales of \$52,212,000. The sales figure was highest in company history. For 1952, earnings were \$2,163,000 on \$38.7 million sales.

American Potash 1953 Sales Topped \$22 Million

American Potash & Chemical Corp. reports that its 1953 sales and earnings were well above those of 1952. Net sales for the year were \$22,461,056, compared with \$18,049,179 in 1952. The 1953 total includes sales of the recently acquired Eston Chemicals Division, but the 1952 figure includes Eston sales only in the last five months of the year.

Net income amounted to \$2,116,082, compared with the 1952 net of \$1,670,555.

The company's research budget in 1953, Mr. Colefax said, was about 3% of its sales and the company expects to increase the amount this year.