

THE OUTLOOK FOR MIXED METALS

Walter P. Carroll, vice president,
National Lead Company, Chicago, Ill.

Normally the outlook for mixed metals in a growing industrial country like ours would be very good over a period, said Mr. Carroll. It is true shortages and high prices for lead, tin and antimony during the past six years have brought about the use of cheaper substitutes but increased units and new uses have more than held the volume. Probably 90% of mixed metals are or may be of scrap origin. Battery grids, solder, babbitt, type metals, airplane dies, bullet wire, shot, castings - chemical and atomic, and miscellaneous mixed metals, represent 50% of the lead consumed annually. While battery sales have been above normal the past 14 months and though an old battery is scrapped for each new one, Mr. Carroll declared that a big percentage of antimonial scrap is being softened and sold as refined lead to offset our loss of import lead.

Because of price control in this country and a higher world price, much of the lead normally imported to this country is now going abroad.

M-38 order recently extended restricts manufacturing of new batteries, etc. Further, said Mr. Carroll, less scrap will be available resulting in more drastic curtailment of lead consumption this coming summer.

To conserve steel, Mr. Carroll pointed out that all of the automobile manufacturers would be obliged to increase their solder consumption on 1952 models this fall. He indicated that one of the leading manufacturers would require an additional 100%. Several other instances of increased consumption planned for the future have been postponed.

Mr. Carroll stated that all mixed metal manufacturers urge their consumers to return their scrap metal and dresses through regular channels or direct promptly and regularly in order to keep the metal flowing.

As of this date, the lead picture for the balance of 1951, declared Mr. Carroll, is most confusing. His advice; Tighten your lead belt and conserve mixed metals until the foreign market is satisfied or until our Government comes to the rescue.

Presented at the 23rd Annual Meeting, Lead Industries Association, May 17-18, 1951, at the Panel Discussion of Lead Consumers.