paralyzed birds were given different treatments, such as ultra-violet light, special diet or the widely advertised iodine vermicide, but all were ineffective. The disease is surmised to be due to a neurotrophic virus.

(Investigation under the direction of Dr. H. W. Hill.)

Associate Committee on Asbestos

Co-operating organizations:

Canadian Asbestos Producers and Manufacturers
Dominion Department of Mines
Quebec Bureau of Mines

A preliminary study of the asbestos industry was made in 1926 by the technical staff of the National Research Council, at the suggestion of the Associate Committee on Physics and Engineering Physics, whose members had enumerated a large number of problems. In the report covering this preliminary survey it was recommended that work be done on certain problems of the industry, but as the asbestos producers did not at that time feel any special need of government assistance, the Council decided to take no further action.

In the spring of 1930, however, the asbestos producers after consultation among themselves made a formal request for assistance to the National Research Council. The President accordingly arranged a conference with the producers, which was held at Thetford Mines on June 2, 1930. The situation was reviewed at that meeting, and it was recommended that the National Research Council form a committee to make a systematic study of the problems of the industry and to undertake such laboratory investigations as might appear to be warranted.

Until a few years ago Canada was in the happy position of being the world's chief producer of asbestos, which was readily sold at a good profit. Prices during the war rose to a high level and remained high for some time subsequently, but this proved an incentive to other countries to utilize their asbestos reserves. Important advances took place in the Union of South Africa, Rhodesia, Russia, and the state of Arizona. With increasing quantities of asbestos being offered, the price fell rapidly, this movement being greatly accentuated by the severe depression which began in 1929 and has continued to date. It was a particularly severe blow to Arizona and Canada where labor costs are high and the deposits in general of a comparatively low grade. In South Africa, Rhodesia and Russia, however, the grade of rock is high and labor costs are low. These countries consequently made important advances, chiefly at the expense of Canada. In 1918 Canada produced about 80% of the world's tonnage of asbestos and 71% of its dollar value, whereas in 1929 the tonnage had fallen to 71% and its value to 53%. The relative position of Canada was still further weakened in 1930, although it is to be noted that in the latter year the dollar value of asbestos products manufactured in Canada reached a new high record.

Realizing the urgency of the situation, the National Research Council immediately appointed an asbestos committee with representatives of the asbestos producers and manufacturers and the Dominion and Quebec de-

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