

*Miner operating drill underground in Willroy Mines.*



*Underground shift going on duty in Willroy Mines.*

*Filter operation at the Geco Mill.*



Improvement District — problems which probably would not arise in a normal municipality in which growth could be gradual and to a greater extent self-sustaining. In the first eight years of its corporate existence Manitowadge incurred capital expenditures totalling about \$3,000,000. Most of this money was raised through the sale of debentures to the government of Ontario.

The whole concept of Manitowadge as a pre-planned and pre-engineered community developed under government supervision was a complete departure from the norm. It was an experiment on the grand scale — an experiment that, only a few years after it began, paid extra dividends in the development of the Improvement District of Elliot Lake. The lessons learned at Manitowadge stood the planners in good stead when a fully planned and equipped town was needed in a hurry to house the miners who flocked to that area in the uranium boom of the mid-fifties. There is no doubt that still other communities

will come into being in Northern Ontario, and when they do it is altogether likely that they, too, will bear the stamp of the Manitowadge experiment.

Although a broadening of the base of Manitowadge's economy is a development to be hoped for, the town's real reason for existence lies in the mines which together employ close to 1,000 people.

Geco, the largest operation, has

about 650 employees. The ore reserves so far outlined total 29,400,000 tons after mining about 21,000,000 tons since the beginning of operations. The mill has been expanded to an operating capacity of 5,000 tons per day for an annual milling total of 1,825,000 tons. Geco's milling operations began in September 1957.

While the mine is primarily a copper, zinc and silver producer, it

also yields considerable values in lead with some gold. Copper, zinc and lead are concentrated at the mine. Gold and silver are returned in the copper concentrates. The copper is sent to the Noranda smelter for refining. The zinc concentrate is refined by Canadian Electrolytic Zinc Limited at Valleyfield, Quebec, and the lead goes to Trail, B.C.

A major extension program, which started in 1963, included the construction of the new No. 4 shaft to a depth of 4,000 feet, a headframe and friction-type hoists, and underground development. The No. 4 shaft, which is circular and concrete-lined, 21½ feet in diameter, is 4,000 feet east of the Number 1 shaft. The shafts are connected at four levels. In 1970 more than half the mine's total production was hoisted through the No. 4 shaft.

The Willroy mine which is established on six copper-lead-zinc orebodies has produced more than 100 million dollars in new wealth since production started in July of 1957. Practically all of this money has

been injected into the economy of Canada in the form of wages, supplies and taxes. Willroy was acquired in 1970 by the Little Long Lac Gold Mines Limited through Lake Shore Mines Limited.

The neighbouring Willecho mine from which production was started in 1965 has been merged with Willroy. It is established on three orebodies on the old Lun-Echo property. Mining operations are being conducted down to the 1,800-foot level. The copper, lead and zinc concentrates that are produced from both properties are shipped to Noranda, the United States and Europe for smelting.

Willroy has a lease on still another property. The Big Nama Creek orebody is just about one mile from the Willroy mill. The first ore shipments were in 1969 and continued for two years before operations were suspended. The output of this mine also was handled in the Willroy mill.

Several other companies hold property in the Manitouwadge area. Varying amounts of work have been

*Watertower and headframe form geometric patterns at Willroy Mines.*



done on them, but there is no indication that any of these companies has immediate plans to proceed with active mining operations. There is no prediction as to what the future may bring.

Already in a few short years, the wilderness area of the Cave of the Great Spirit has given birth to four mines producing copper, zinc, gold, silver, lead and cadmium, adding in no small degree to the mineral wealth of Canada. In addition, a community with its modern homes, schools, churches, hospital and recreation centre has been provided.

Truly, this has been a monumental achievement which only a few years ago could not have been considered practical or feasible for any new community growing in so remote an area. The development of such a project called for a tremendous amount of planning and plain hard work. Certainly, it did not just happen.

*Ore cars loaded with concentrate from the Willroy mill, wait in a rock-cut siding on mine property.*

