

Expansion in Platinum Production

SHORT AND LONG TERM PLANS AT RUSTENBURG

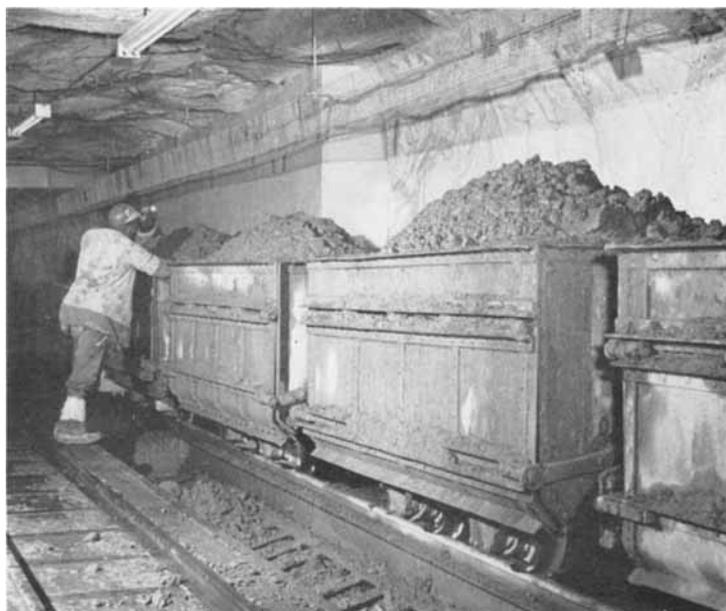
Over the past two years successive programmes of expansion have been announced by Rustenburg Platinum Mines Limited, each designed to maintain output in balance with demand and to give effect to the declared policy of the mining company and its sole refiners and marketing agents Johnson Matthey & Co Limited to ensure to the best of their ability that platinum shall always be available for use by industrial consumers, and that it shall be available at reasonably steady prices.

In a statement published in February, Mr D. A. B. Watson, Chairman of Rustenburg, confirms that the programme to expand mine production is proceeding satisfactorily and is on schedule. Output has increased steadily and substantially and is still increasing, and the full designed milling rate will by now have been reached. Reserves of ore at the mine are amply sufficient to provide the tonnage of ore required to maintain production over a very

long period either at the presently designed rate or at a substantially increased rate of milling.

Consideration has also been given, says Mr Watson, to the advisability of increasing the rate of production still further and to the most rapid means of so doing. As an immediate short-term measure, steps are being taken to increase rapidly, and for as long as may be necessary, the company's output of platinum beyond the designed capacity of the plants. This additional increase will be achieved by relatively inefficient technical measures, by increasing the tonnage of ore delivered to the crusher station and there sorting out the lower grade fraction, while at the same time operating the reduction plants beyond their designed capacities. These expedients, which will become fully effective in terms of mine production towards the end of the present year, will produce more metal but will be expensive; if it is found that this additional

Platinum ore loaded into hopper trains at Rustenburg. Very large tonnages of ore are available, and for many years ahead expansion can be effected here more rapidly and more efficiently than in other areas in which mineral rights are held by the mining company





Ore is carried by conveyor belt to the sorting station in the reduction plant

output is likely to be required for several years then steps will be taken to introduce more efficient methods of achieving this end.

At the same time the company has reconsidered whether the next major expansion should be initiated at an earlier date than had previously been thought necessary. If during

the present year events indicate that additional capacity might be needed ahead of the date originally contemplated, then immediate steps will be taken to provide this even though a part of such capacity might in due course and in certain circumstances prove to be in excess of requirements from time to time.

PLATINUM-WOUND FURNACES IN THE MANUFACTURE OF SEMICONDUCTORS

For the diffusion heat treatment of semiconductor materials the advantages of rhodium-platinum wound tubular furnaces include long life at the high temperatures involved, compactness, and high rates of heating and cooling. Each of the units in this battery of Johnson Matthey furnaces in the Lincoln factory of Associated Electrical Industries Limited is maintained at a closely controlled temperature to carry out one of the many diffusion processes required by the wide range of devices produced by AEI.

