Cement and Slate

The limestones, other than those used for cement manufacture, have contributed much to the economic development of the county but at the present are of lesser importance. For many special purposes it is advisable to bring in from other regions limestones of greater purity.

Cement.—The argillaceous limestones that outcrop in a band crossing the county from Northampton to Riverton, passing through Bath, Nazareth, Stockertown and Martins Creek, have contributed enormously to the wealth of the region. The cement plants in this belt are almost entirely responsible for the main growth and development of all of the towns mentioned. No other mineral product of the county has been used as extensively and so far as the supply of desirable stone is concerned the industry will long retain its important position.

Slate.—Nearly all the towns of the northern part of the county owe their location and growth to slate operations in their immediate vicinity. Until recently, scarcely a building of any kind could be seen in the region that did not have a slate roof. Slate has been produced for many other purposes. However, regardless of the fact that the region ranks first in the Nation, the local slate industry has had its ups and downs. It has prospered when building activity prevailed and suffered when depressions have curtailed building operations. The local industry is capable of a production far in excess of any demand thus far made as an almost unlimited supply of excellent material is available.

Minor mineral products.—Deposits of sand, gravel, clay, building stones, and mineral pigments have had no small part in the upbuilding of the region, although their use has almost always been extremely local.

Chemical Manufactures

The chemical manufacturing establishments in the region are many and varied. Some of these, such as lime, cement, iron and steel, clay products, mineral pigments and breweries, are separately discussed. There remain, however, a few to be briefly described here.

The first strictly chemical operation definitely recorded within the Lehigh Valley was the burning of lime for the Whitefield house in Nazareth and for the foundations of the first Moravian buildings in Bethlehem. Soap was made by the Moravians in the basement of the Sisters House within a short time after it was built, and both tanning and fulling (the tanning of soft or white leather) was done in Bethle-