

STEEL IN CANADA*

Primary steel production is now one of Canada's most important manufacturing industries, ranking sixth among all industries in terms of value of output, and fourth in terms of value added, by the processing of raw materials, to marketable products. In 1957, the industry employed about 36,000 persons making it the third largest employer of labour in Canadian manufacturing.

HISTORY

The steel industry in Canada traces its origins to the establishment of iron-producing facilities in the Province of Quebec about 1730 and to similar establishments founded in Eastern Canada during the next one hundred and fifty years. While some of these small enterprises enjoyed short-term success, all eventually were forced to cease operation. It was not until 1874 that the first steel was produced in Canada—a short-lived mill using the Siemens open-hearth process started operations not far from Truro, N.S. About the same time several steel rolling-mills using imported steel were established in various parts of the country and by 1905 most of the major mills which today comprise a large portion of Canada's steel industry had been brought into operation. Their establishment and success was attributable to two important factors—the development of a national tariff policy and the demand for steel by the railways in the form of rails and rolling-stock.

Production increased rapidly between 1900 and 1914 and during World War I capacity was further increased to meet wartime requirements, so much so that there was an excess of steel-making capacity in Canada for a considerable period after the end of that War.

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