The total supply of pig iron reached a peak in 1949, when twelve Canadian blast furnaces turned out nearly 2.2 million tons of new metal. Since then, domestic output has risen further. Imports, which are relatively small, have also increased. Exports rose sharply in the period between April and December 1950 when government controls were not in effect. As a result, the domestic supply of pig iron for the year as a whole was slightly lower than in 1949.

In 1951, domestic production of pig iron reached a new high, due to fuller utilization of existing capacity and due to the introduction of a new 300-thousand-ton-a-year blast furnace at Hamilton. Another 450-thousand-ton-a-year blast furnace to be built at the Steel Company of Canada will not be producing iron until late in 1952. Pig iron is also a by-product of the smelting of titanium ores. It is expected that production from the new plant at Sorel, Quebec, will reach 175 thousand tons annually in a few years time. However, little will be available from this source in the immediate future. Exports in 1952 are likely to be at about the same level as last year. In spite of the improvement in supply the requirements of the defence, defence-supporting, and resource development programmes will cause an increase in the current pressure on scrap.

As was mentioned earlier, in recent years approximately 80 per cent of the pig iron consumed in Canada has been charged to steel furnaces. The remaining 20 per cent has been divided almost equally between foundry and malleable pig iron used in the manufacture of castings. Only a relatively small proportion of the basic pig iron made by the primary steel industry is sold to other steel-using industries. On the other hand, very little of the foundry and malleable pig iron is used directly by the primary producers themselves.

Demand for basic pig iron, which remained virtually unchanged from 1947 up until the middle of 1950, has since shown a moderate increase. In 1951, an additional 300 thousand tons were needed to support a higher level of domestic steel production.

Canadian consumption of foundry and malleable pig iron has varied much more widely over the past few years. In the years from 1946 to 1948, manufacturers of farm implements, industrial machinery and railway rolling stock were increasing their output. Therefore their consumption of pig iron rose steadily throughout this period. In 1949 and the first half of 1950, demand from these industries declined. However, with the exception of farm machinery, this trend has again been reversed. Throughout the post-war period, consumption in plants making sanitary ware and cooking and heating equipment has continued steadily upward. In 1951, increased demands were encountered in most of these industries.

Overall demand for pig iron of all types in 1952 is likely to be several hundred thousand tons greater than in 1951. These increased needs are being met by additional production in this country.