



REFERENCE PAPERS

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 81

IRON ORE IN CANADA

by

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Iron ore was first mined and smelted in Canada about the year 1736 at Les Forges, Quebec. During the 18th, 19th, and first quarter of this century, about six million tons of ore were mined and employed in the manufacture of items ranging all the way from kettles, stoves, and cannon for the early settlers to weapons of war for the allied armies of World War I.

However, there is little relationship between the structure, character, and size of the iron ore industry during these early years and that of recent years. The modern Canadian iron ore industry had its beginnings in 1939, when Algoma Ore Properties brought its Helen Mine, in the Michipicoten area of Ontario, back into production after a closure of twenty years. Surprisingly enough, this entrance was not based on high-grade, direct-shipping ore but on low-grade, beneficiating siderite.

Since 1939, the Canadian iron ore industry has grown tremendously. In contrast to the period 1924-1938, when no iron ore was produced, the ore is rapidly becoming one of Canada's major mineral products. Production during 1955 amounted to about 15 million long tons valued at \$113 million dollars. On the basis of current and probable developments it is expected that production by the mid-1960's will attain a scale of between 46 to 60 million long tons per year.

Algoma Ore Properties followed its Helen Open Pit Mine, when the economic depth of open pit mining was reached in 1945, with the Victoria Open Pit Mine. In turn, the Victoria Open Pit Mine was followed by the Helen Underground Mine in 1950, and the Victoria Underground Mine in 1954. Current capacity of the company's sinter plant at Jamestown, 3 miles from the minesite, is $1\frac{1}{2}$ million long tons of sinter per year. Approximately $\frac{1}{5}$ of the output is shipped by rail to the parent company's steel plant at Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, and $\frac{4}{5}$ is exported to the United States.

Following the reopening of the Helen Mine by Algoma Ore Properties there have ensued a succession of events important in the history of the modern Canadian iron ore industry. These have included:

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