



The LRC (Light, Rapid, Comfortable) train is the only high-speed inter-city passenger train of North American design. It is manufactured by Bombardier, one of the few companies in the world to offer a full range of rail guided systems.

sizeable proportion of Quebec's exports, the main growth in recent years has been in high-tech products — for example in transportation equipment and aerospace.

The geography of Quebec has always called for innovative solutions on the transportation front, so it is hardly surprising that transportation equipment manufactured there is noted for the excellence of its design. The product range in this sector is vast — from subway cars to locomotives, and from snowmobiles to buses.

However, it is for its aerospace industry that Quebec is perhaps best known. About 100 companies and 22 000 people are involved in this industry, generating annual sales in excess of £1 billion and accounting for 50 percent of Canada's aeronautics exports.

Pratt and Whitney of Canada, for instance, sends gas turbine engines all over the world and is the leader in the design and manufacture of commuter and business-aircraft jet engines. Then there is Bombardier-Canadair, Canada's biggest airframe manufacturer, which makes a wide range of aircraft, including business jets, drones and water bombers. Amongst the British companies involved in this sector, Rolls-Royce have a major facility and Lucas Aerospace are similarly present.

Other Quebec-based aerospace companies include CAE, which manufactures flight simulators; Marconi, which specialises in instrumentation and electronics; and Spar, which has gained renown as a satellite contractor.

Important developments in the high-tech field

High-tech products are big business these days, and in order to survive companies need to establish markets abroad. One firm that has done this is Bell Canada, a pioneer of many innovations in telecommunications. For example, it recently worked on Saudi Arabia's ultra-modern telecommunications system; while its subsidiary, Northern Telecom, manufactures state-of-the-art telecommunications equipment for markets around the world.

SR Telecom of Saint-Laurent is another Quebec-based, high-tech firm with an international reputation. The subscriber radio systems it has developed can link remote areas not easily accessible to the telephone network. About 90 percent of its output is now sold overseas.

Another Saint-Laurent firm — Ogivar Technologies — builds micro-computers, and recently struck a deal with a Japanese company to assemble its small lap top computer. Another firm with an eye on the export market is Comterm of Point-Claire, one of the first companies in the world to develop terminals in Arabic. It builds terminals and terminal concentrators, and also supplies integrated office automation systems.

In the specialised field of analysis instruments, Bomem Inc of Quebec City is a world leader, ranking first in Canada and fifth in the world. It manufactures and distributes sophisticated models of interferometric spectrophotometers for research and process of quality control. As with SR Telecom, about 90 percent of its production goes overseas.

On the leading edge in bio-technology

Biotechnology has also become one of the more promising areas of Quebec's economy. It received new impetus in 1987 with the opening of the Biotechnology Research Institute (BRI) in Montreal, a branch of the National Research Council of Canada.

Among the firms located on BRI's premises is Medicorp Inc, a company founded in 1985 to develop AIDS and cancer diagnostics and AIDS therapeutics based on monoclonal antibodies. Among those firms working closely with the Institute is Domtar Inc — in the area of higher value added chemicals.

Another research institute similarly involved with advanced research on the AIDS virus is IAF, who also produce vaccines and diagnostic kits.

Of the 130-or-so manufacturers of pharmaceutical products in Canada, 48 are located in Quebec; some of them are subsidiaries of multinationals, such as Beecham and Burroughs-Wellcome.

Cooperation by these firms with public research centres is increasingly common. Rhône-Poulenc Pharma, for instance, working with specialists from Laval University, has developed a new quinolone-based antibiotic.

International consultancies based in Quebec

In addition, several engineering and general consulting firms have established their headquarters in the province. Among these are SNC, Lavalin and Monenco, ranked among the top ten international consultancies. Many of their large-scale projects relate to hydro-electricity; but there is also plenty of expertise available in other areas, such as mining engineering, forestry, urban development, off-shore drilling and exploration; which makes Quebec an excellent base from which to penetrate both North American and overseas markets.

Downtown Montreal

