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THE IRON INDUSTRY

While great progress is being made in mining many metals in Canada the iron industry lags behind. The reason is undoubtedly that most of the iron deposits thus far discovered are not of a character to permit of profitable mining.

Iron smelters find it economical to import iron ores from other countries rather than to use Canadian ores. They would rather use Canadian ores if a good supply were available. Unfortunately the known deposits of good ore in Canada are few. It is very well known that there are many occurrences of iron ore in Canada, and that some of the deposits are large. The large deposits are, however, not of high grade and cannot be mined and smelted in competition with ores from outside. There are in Canada many extensive areas of "iron formations." It is not unlikely that good ore bodies occur in parts of these iron formations. The locating of them has, however, not yet been successful.

According to Mr. McLeish, of the Department of Mines, the iron ore shipments from Canadian mines in 1913 amounted to 307,634 tons, valued at \$629,843. This is a very small amount as compared with the iron used in Canada. Imports of iron ore during the year amounted to 1,942,325 tons, valued at \$3,877,824. Imports of pig iron amounted to 253,843 tons, valued at \$3,234,877. There was also imported 926 tons of charcoal pig iron, valued at \$12,528; and 30,355 tons ferro-manganese, ferro-silicon, etc., valued at \$940,443.

The situation is not a new one. It has long been recognized as a painfully distressing one. An effort is now being made to relieve it by obtaining Government assistance in carrying on the industry. At Ottawa last week a proposal was made that a bounty should be given to the producers of iron ore. The amount asked for is about 50 cents per ton of ore produced and smelted in Canada.

That such a bounty would give a great impetus to the iron mining industry is beyond doubt. Many deposits now idle could be profitably worked. A large number of men would be given employment at mines, railways and smelters. The development of the present known deposits would doubtless lead to the discovery of others. Exploration for iron ores would be carried on with great enthusiasm and possibly result in the discovery of much better ore bodies. The bounty would not only aid those who are ready to mine known ore bodies, but would result in a very thorough search for iron ore throughout the country.