According to the most recent *Census of Construction Industries*, there were a total of 1.4 million construction companies[1] in the United States in 1982, three-quarters of which were individual proprietorships. Slightly over four thousand of these firms had annual receipts of greater than $US 10 million, collectively accounting for 36 percent of industry revenues. The average "large" firm (greater than $US 10 million in annual revenue) conducted $US 22 million worth of business in 1982, an amount which has likely reached $US 25-30 million as of 1988.

When adjusted by the usual factor of one-tenth to reflect the relative population, the Canadian corporate structure is quite similar to that in the United States. For example, as of 1988, there were around 130,000 construction firms in Canada. The 650 large firms (with sales over $US 10 million) account for 34 percent of total industry revenues. These "large" Canadian firms each average $US 20-25 million in annual business, an amount very similar to the average "large" firm in the United States. Due to the sizeable number of individual proprietorships, the average annual billing of a Canadian construction firm is only about $300,000, similar to the average American construction company. One Canadian contractor expressed the opinion that American firms will travel greater distances than Canadian firms to pursue contract work, and that competition in Canada is therefore more localized. However, this opinion does not mesh with the view of certain U.S. executives that the American industry has become highly regionalized during the past two decades, nor with the information suggesting that American contractors in general are of comparable size to Canadian firms.

American construction firms are not as dominant on the world stage as in former years. The total value of international contracts won by those U.S contractors listed amongst the world's 250 largest construction firms has decreased in value from $US 44 billion in 1980 to $US 23 billion in 1986, largely due to the rise of Japanese and European firms. This total dropped further in 1987, before rising to $US 26 billion in 1988.

In addition to losing market share internationally, American firms are being faced with renewed competition in their own markets. Many of the largest international construction contractors have entered the American market during the past five years, largely because of declining prospects in Third World markets. This has been accomplished mainly through buying existing American firms, although many companies have also entered through establishing branch operations. Foreign-owned construction firms won $US 8.9 billion worth of American construction contracts

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[1] Includes developers and subdividers