



CANADIAN WEEKLY BULLETIN

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

Vol. 12 No. 19

May 8, 1957

WATER-POWER RESOURCES OF CANADA

The Water Resources Branch, Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, in its annual review of the water-power resources of Canada and of their development as achieved to the end of the year 1956, points out that the water powers of Canada, although only partly developed, have exercised a marked influence on the economic development of the country.

Throughout the present century, there has been a gradual change from an economy based largely on agriculture to one increasingly dependent upon industrial operations and this transition, closely coinciding with the growth of water-power development, has been accelerating in recent years. The close relationship between water power and industry in Canada is particularly evident in southern Quebec and Ontario which, although lacking in indigenous coal, have become the most highly industrialized regions of the country through the use of their large water power resources. The Province of British Columbia, which is rich in potential water power, also has been making rapid industrial progress coincident with water-power development. These three provinces in particular continue to experience the rapid industrial growth which is evident in varying degree throughout the nation.

From the pronounced activity in hydro-electric construction in Canada during 1956, it is evident that this general trend is continuing vigorously. A total of 845,000 h.p.

of new capacity was brought into operation during the year and the construction of additional hydro-electric capacity is being accelerated.

Figures of power available at Ordinary-Six-Months Flow which total 57,007,000 h.p. may be said to be conservative as these presently recorded water-power resources of Canada will permit an economic turbine installation of about 74,000,000 h.p. Also, the present total turbine installation of 18,356,148 h.p. indicates the development of less than 25 per cent of the recorded water-power resources of Canada.

LARGE RESERVES

Although extensive use of Canada's water-power resources is being made at the present time, large reserves of potential power are still available. It is true in some areas, where the more attractive sites within economic transmission distance of present centres of population already have been developed, that the use of thermal-electric stations is becoming increasingly important. However, remaining reserves of not-too-distant power are sufficient to meet the prospective needs of a considerable part of the more closely settled areas for some years at the very least; also, improvements in the technique of long-distance transmission, including the use of higher voltage, are bringing additional sites within the orbit of existing systems. In

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