



CANADA

CANADIAN WEEKLY BULLETIN

INFORMATION DIVISION • DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS • OTTAWA, CANADA

Vol. 13 No. 47

November 19, 1958

CONTENTS

The Chemical Industry in Canada	1	Ambassador from Iran	5
New Mineral Map of Canada	2	Guthrie Award	5
Broadcast Governors Named	3	The Canadian Theatre Centre	5
Oil and Gas Wells	3	Ships for the Navy	5
Manufacturing in Maritimes	4	Retail Sales Larger	6
"Roads to Resources"	4	Housing Units ..	6
Fruit Crop in 1957	4		

THE CHEMICAL INDUSTRY IN CANADA

Mr. H. Greville Smith, President of Canadian Industries Limited, and President of the Society of Chemical Industry, addressed the annual meeting of the Society which was held in Montreal recently. Part of his speech appears below:

"Before the war, new chemical processes often did not come into operation in Canada until many years after their discovery and reduction to practice in other countries. But in the period during and since the war, new processes began to be installed soon after their commercial development elsewhere, reflecting in some measure the advance of secondary manufacturing in this country.

"Thus nylon filament and yarn manufacturing facilities, using imported intermediates, were installed in Canada two years after commercial operations began in the United States; subsequently the Canadian operations were expanded by Du Pont of Canada to include manufacture of intermediates from cyclohexane. This addition was followed by plants to convert acrylonitrile to 'Orlon' fibre and to produce hydrogen peroxide by an organic chemical process, each addition coming soon after introduction of the process in the United States. The manufacture of 'Terylene' polyester fibre, developed in the United Kingdom, was undertaken by C-I-L, thus completing the production in Canada of most of the leading chemical fibres.

"The net effect has been to bring Canada up to the front line in many of the newer

chemical processes. There are, however, some omissions from the list. Owing to the limited domestic market, the less important petrochemicals are unlikely to be made in Canada, except in so far as this can be done with existing plant; conditions for manufacturing dyes in Canada are unfavourable because of the large variety of chemically unrelated products, each consumed in small quantity.

"In the United Kingdom the manufacture of dyes, pharmaceuticals and, later, synthetic resins was closely associated with the coal tar industry which, in turn, owed its existence to earlier developments in the production of iron, steel, coke and manufactured gas.

"The Canadian picture is quite different. Manufactured gas never achieved the same position in Canada that it has in the United Kingdom, hydro-electric power and natural gas being readily available in many areas. The first use for coal tar was to provide creosote for wood preservation, a highly necessary treatment for the millions of railway ties, as well as for telegraph and telephone poles right across Canada.

"The expanding electrochemical industry required carbon and graphite for electrodes and furnace linings. Coal tar pitch has proved to be the best binder for electrodes, but coke from coal tar pitch has largely been replaced for this purpose by the cheaper petroleum coke. Thus the chief products of Dominion Tar and Chemical Company made from coal tar are

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