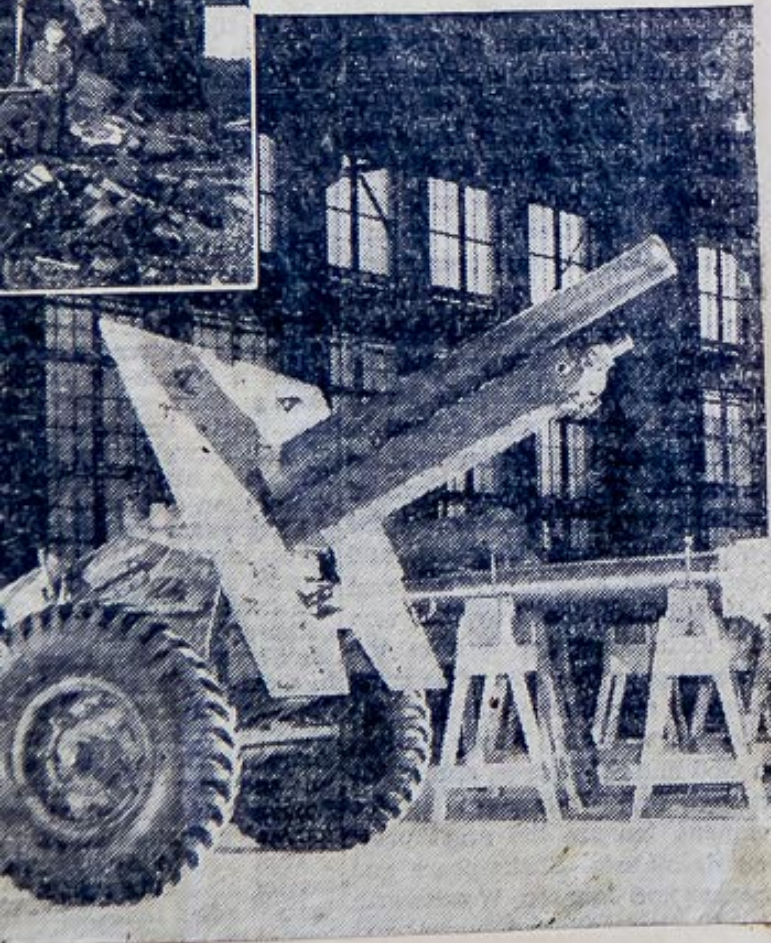




(Left) There is only one plant in North America where cannon are made from scrap to finished gun in the one place—that's at Sorel, P.Q.

(Below) The latest in field pieces is this British 25-pounder equipment made in the heart of French Canada at Sorel, P.Q.



A Great Day in Sorel

By B. T. R.

SOREL, Que.: The moment on Dominion Day, when gunners of the 2nd Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery rolled up the big Union Jack and uncovered Canada's first 25-pounder field piece before a crowd of 5,000 persons, marked the biggest day in the history of this district since Samuel de Champlain paddled inquiringly up the river that runs into the St. Lawrence at this point and discovered the inland water system that leads to Lake Champlain and ultimately on to the Hudson River and Manhattan. Champlain called the river by the name of Richelieu. This was one of the best public showings of progress in armaments manufacture that this observer has seen.

Making 25-Pounders

The story of the Sorel armaments industry includes several important items besides the 25-pounders. As Edouard Simard, one of the owners of Sorel Industries, Ltd., and a leading French-Canadian industrialist, said, Sorel has a five-column reply to charges of fifth columning in Quebec. Sorel makes 25-pounders, naval guns, corvettes, minesweepers, and 10,000-ton cargo ships to carry the other items to Britain. But the 25-pounder is the star production item, and Sorel Industries is the only gun factory in North America that

technical, one would add that, of course, the rubber tires and a few specialties like sights are made elsewhere.

In most armaments industries, forging the gun barrels and making the mountings, to name two important items, are regarded as separate processes. But in Sorel these are done in the same plant. Make no mistake, Canada has not got its 25-pounders as quickly as industrial leaders thought we would, and the job has taken months longer than expected. But the whole complicated manufacturing process is now well established.

The Simards and the French

In Sorel the big name is Simard, and the Simard Freres virtually own the town. Before the war they started looking into the prospects of establishing a British gun plant here. But the British were not inclined to release designs and blueprints for field guns, so the Simards opened negotiations with the big French armaments makers, Schneider-Creusot, and landed a plant for making French 75-millimeter field guns. They started to build the plant the month before the war began, and obtained technical experts from France.

The collapse of France brought serious interruption, and the whole project was switched over to the new British 25-pounders. The

toba Bridge and Iron, was sent down as manager, and then early this year, Chrysler Corporation of Canada undertook to loan the government plant management experts and technicians to put the project over.

At the dedication of the first gun, six field pieces were brought out for firing and demonstration. But visitors could see throughout the plant plenty of evidence that many more guns are on the way and the stage of continuous production, if not actually reached, is not far away. Guns in all stages of production were seen in the plant. The first six are going right away to Canada's training camps, and subsequent guns will be delivered overseas.

The war has made Sorel into one of Canada's most lively boom towns. The new gun factory is a modern, concrete-and-steel series of buildings of the kind that typify the emergence of a new industrial power in this country.

It is almost entirely a French-Canadian project, and many of the workers can hardly more than speak a smattering of English. The French language as it is spoken in Quebec contains many anglicisms to describe mechanical details, but in the Sorel plant, for the first time, the mechanics are using the original French terms. Thus in Quebec, as elsewhere in Canada, a monkey wrench is a monkey wrench and no one would