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This paper deals with some aspects of the Brazilian tin boom. It emphasizes the main determinant factors, the effects and the economic perspectives of the sector, in order to show its role in the Brazilian mining-economic setting, in the period 1980-1999.

Brazil's tin mining, went through a birth with rudimentary production methods (1903-1969) evolving into a phase of large scale modern operations (1970-), with vertical integration from mine to refining smelter.

However, only in the 1980's –with the important discoveries of 'Pitinga', 1982 (Amazonas) and 'Bom Futuro', 1987 (Rondonia)– the Brazilian tin sector experienced a sudden growth in tin content of ores production, about 1,365% (1970/1989) and 665% (1980/1989).

Thus, the internal market reinforced its condition showing a surplus among non-ferrous producers and was launched to the international market as an important exporter of metallic tin, climbing from the sixth place, as a producer in the Western World, in 1980 –below Austrália, Bolívia, Thailand and Malaysia– to the first ranking, during the period 1988-1990.

In this setting, it can be seen that the positive impact of the exports, due to the favorable conditions provided by the Brazilian deposits, caused an excess of optimism in the tin business, leading to the impression that the crisis initiated by the LME would be overcome. Despite the inherent competitiveness of the Brazilian deposits, both management and political issues compromised greatly the sustainability of the mining-economic Brazilian tin sector.

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