

MINERAL RESOURCES

Salt.—Salt of superior quality is produced in Huron, Bruce, Middlesex, Lambton and Essex counties in the southwestern peninsula of Ontario, the principal plants being located at Windsor, Sarnia, Sandwich, Goderich, Clinton and Kincardine. Salt beds have been proved to underlie a territory 2,500 square miles in extent, fronting on the shore of lake Huron, between Kincardine and lake Erie, and reaching inland at its greatest breadth to a distance of about forty miles. In some cases the water naturally, in filtrating through the rock salt, produces a brine which is pumped up, but in many cases it is necessary to pour water into bore-holes sunk to the salt beds and pump it up again after it has dissolved the salt, forming a brine. Samples of salt produced at Goderich, Ontario, have been compared with samples of rock salt of Cheshire, England, the most productive salt field of Great Britain. An analysis of this English salt, in a report to the British House of Commons, showed that it contained eleven times more impurities than the Canadian salt contains. The purity of the Ontario salt makes it particularly suitable for the manufacture of caustic soda and bleaching powder. Salt springs have been found in Antigonish, Inverness, Cumberland and Hants counties, in Nova Scotia, but no attempt seems to have been made to utilize them. In the vicinity of the Slave and Athabaska rivers there are many salt-water springs, and witnesses before a committee of the Dominion Senate reported large quantities of rock salt in the vicinity of Fort McMurray on the Athabaska river. Mr. George A. Mulloy, in a report to the Forestry Branch of the Department of the Interior, said:

The water of the Salt river, a tributary of the Athabaska, is very salty. About ten miles from its mouth a district called the Salt Country is reached. Everywhere in this district the sloughs and creeks are saturated with salt, and in many places where small ponds have dried up the mud is covered with a thick deposit of salt. It permeates everything. Even the leaves of the trees when chewed up taste salty. To the south and southeast a great salt plain stretches. The ground is covered by a very rich growth of grass which does not seem to be affected by the salt.

Natural Gas and Oil.—There is an extensive natural gas field underlying the part of Ontario bordering on lake Erie and extending from the western end of lake Ontario to lake St. Clair and river St. Clair. At different points in this district new discoveries of gas are being made from time to time. At present there are gas wells in operation in Wentworth, Welland, Haldimand, Norfolk, Kent, Elgin and Lambton counties. The gas is of remarkably uniform quality throughout the district, being noted for the absence of carbon dioxide and for its high calorific value, which is estimated to be over 800 British thermal units. The cheapest artificial gas in Ontario is sold in Toronto, where the price is seventy cents per thousand for a gas with a calorific value of about 600 British thermal units. On the same basis of value per heat unit as Toronto artificial gas, it is estimated that the natural gas now consumed in Ontario is worth \$11,000,000 annually and that its use means the saving of a great quantity of coal. The natural gas is not only being piped to cities and towns, but is used in many farmhouses. Recently gas has been discovered in Russell county, at Bourget, about twenty-six miles from Ottawa. Petroleum has been discovered at many points in the southwestern peninsula of Ontario, but the most productive wells are in Lambton county, the Tilbury district in Kent county, and