

Although early explorers reported the occurrence of minerals in various sections of the Northwest Territories, it was not until 1920 when crude oil was discovered at Norman Wells, about 100 miles west of Great Bear Lake, that much serious attention was given to the possibilities of the Territories as a source of mineral wealth. This development aroused considerable interest for a time but little of importance happened until 1930 when Gilbert La Bine reported the discovery of pitchblende deposits at Echo Bay on the east shore of Great Bear Lake. This historic event actually gave mining its start in the Territories and, along with the advent of the aeroplane, paved the way for the developments that have followed.

Attention soon turned to gold and before long various discoveries of this metal were made in the Yellowknife area. The first gold brick was poured in 1938 and gold mining has since become a well-established industry in the area, being the main source of livelihood for the 2,724 persons of Yellowknife Settlement. By 1945 production of gold from the area had reached an annual value of \$333,218, and in 1951 had increased to \$7,755,119. Giant Yellowknife Gold Mines Limited with an output of 107,000 oz t. in 1951, is by far the largest producer, the others being Con, Rycon, Negus and Discovery Yellowknife.

Exploratory interest in the Territories is at present concentrated on the search for base metals, petroleum, natural gas and uranium. In connection with the base metals, the search is centred in the Pine Point area on the south shore of Great Slave Lake where the Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company of Canada Limited has been doing exploratory drilling on a large zinc-lead deposit to determine whether there is sufficient ore to warrant further development of the property. There has been considerable prospecting for base metals also in the O'Connor Lake area where American Yellowknife Gold Mines Limited has outlined a medium-sized deposit reported to contain 15 p.c. combined lead and zinc.

The present interest in crude petroleum constitutes a spreading of activity from Alberta northward. Most of the activity is in the Fort Providence area west of Great Slave Lake where some test holes have been drilled and the drilling of others is planned. Some exploratory work is in progress between longitudes 119° and 122° along the Alberta-Northwest Territories boundary and there should be considerable activity in both areas in 1952 as applications have been made for permits to explore several million acres of territory.

The Norman Wells area has been comparatively quiet since World War II and production has been maintained only at a level sufficient to meet the requirements of the various mining operations. Output from wells in the area in 1951 amounted to 215,000 bbl.

Production of uranium ore at the property of the Crown-owned Eldorado Mining and Refining (1944) Limited, at Fort Radium on Echo Bay, which was interrupted by destruction of the mill by fire in November 1951, was resumed in May 1952 with the completion of a new gravity mill and crushing plant. The new leaching unit and related acid plant, which will effect a marked increase in the recovery of uranium, were completed at the same time.

Much of the Northwest Territories still remains unexplored and its outlook as a potential producer of minerals would be difficult to appraise. Most of the main-land portion is underlain by rocks of the Canadian Shield that have proved so highly productive in other parts of Canada. However, except along the western fringes, relatively little geological work has been done in the Shield area. In this connection it should be noted that the Geological Survey of Canada is undertaking a