

In 1952 there were 1,573 wells drilled in Alberta, 488 in Saskatchewan, 74 in Manitoba and 15 in northeastern British Columbia, a total of 2,150. Many of these were development wells drilled within the boundaries of oil fields. Consequently, 1,177 new oil wells were completed, of which 922 were in Alberta, 214 in Saskatchewan, and 40 in Manitoba; one in British Columbia has not been produced. There were also 138 dry gas wells, of which 121 were in Alberta and 17 were in Saskatchewan. In addition, there were 27 wet gas wells containing distillate—17 in Alberta and 10 in British Columbia. The number of dry holes drilled was 808, of which 513 were in Alberta, 257 in Saskatchewan, 34 in Manitoba, and 4 in British Columbia.

In 1952, there was some exploratory activity in the Northwest Territories west and south of Great Slave Lake. Several wells were drilled, in some of which oil shows were found but no well had sufficient oil to produce. However, the results are encouraging for further exploration. The only production in the Northwest Territories at present is from the Norman Wells field where the oil is refined for local use and for mining enterprises in the Territories. In 1952, production from the Norman Wells field was 301,000 bbl., an increase of nearly 73,500 bbl. over 1951.

The year 1952 was important in the development of new markets for oil from Western Canada in that work began on the building of a new oil pipeline from the Edmonton area to Vancouver across the Cordillera. When completed in 1953, the line will have an initial capacity of 120,000 bbl. a day, and extensions of the line to new refineries in the State of Washington are already planned. Also during the year an announcement was made by Interprovincial Pipeline Company that the pipeline now terminating at Superior, Wisconsin, would be extended along the south shore of Lake Superior, across Mackinac Straits at the north end of Lake Michigan, and thence to Sarnia. This line will be 30 inches in diameter and will be capable of handling 300,000 bbl. a day. This is more than the capacity of the line now terminating at Superior so that the original line to Superior will be duplicated to bring its capacity to the necessary amount. Imperial Oil Limited built three large tankers to handle the oil from Superior to Sarnia during the navigation season and British American Oil Company Limited built a tanker to supply its refineries in Central Canada. The proposed pipeline will make it possible to deliver oil to the Sarnia area on a year-round basis uninterrupted by winter conditions.*

The building of pipeline outlets from the Prairie Provinces, as proposed, will make it possible to produce oil in amounts up to about 600,000 bbl. a day. During 1952, peak production exceeded 200,000 bbl. a day and there was potential production of possibly 300,000 bbl. a day. Thus, the new outlets will allow considerable expansion, a situation quite in harmony with the excellent prospects for further discoveries.

Oil production continues in relatively small amounts in Ontario and New Brunswick. In 1952, Ontario produced 192,000 bbl. as compared with 197,171 bbl. in 1951, and New Brunswick yielded 14,500 bbl. compared with 15,551 bbl. In Gaspé the search for oil is being continued but there is no production at present. Some further interest has also been shown in the prospects of the sedimentary basin south and west of Hudson and James Bays but no drilling was done in 1953 in actual prospecting. Information as to the thickness and character of the sediments has been obtained by drilling done by the Ontario Department of Mines.

* More detailed information regarding Canadian oil and gas pipelines is given in the Transportation Chapter (see Index.)