

1.—Crude Oil and Natural Gas Production in Western Canada, 1954-61

Year	Crude Oil				Natural Gas		
	Man.	Sask.	Alta.	B.C.	Sask.	Alta.	B.C.
	'000 bbl.	'000 bbl.	'000 bbl.	'000 bbl.	Mcf.	Mcf.	Mcf.
1954.....	2,148	5,423	87,714	—	3,333,077	107,173,777	—
1955.....	4,146	11,317	113,025	—	6,706,743	133,007,493	—
1956.....	5,787	21,077	143,910	148	9,807,697	146,133,893	187,846
1957.....	6,090	36,861	137,492	341	18,994,347	183,140,820	8,274,942
1958.....	5,829	44,626	113,278	512	18,819,795	239,049,591	63,638,297
1959.....	5,056	47,442	129,967	866	33,612,966	297,568,926	69,128,708
1960.....	4,764	51,868	132,865	867	36,571,633	383,682,986	85,592,166
1961.....	4,485	56,000	157,650	658	35,000,000	497,925,000	94,462,464

The recent trend toward increased drilling in the more northwesterly portions of the Western Canada sedimentary basin continued in 1961. Although there were considerably fewer drilling rigs active during the first eight months of the year than in the same period of 1960, activity increased during the final four months to a level equal to that of the same period of the previous year. Despite generally fewer active rigs, the total footage drilled in 1961 was slightly higher than in 1960, reaching more than 13,500,000 feet. There were 2,840 wells drilled compared with 2,951 in the previous year, 1,577 being oil, 417 gas and 846 dry. Although there were fewer successful oil wells completed, the number of gas-well successes increased mainly as a result of greater concentration on exploring and developing the gas-rich strata of the foothills and northeastern British Columbia; much attention was also given to the development of known gas-producing regions in the southern half of Alberta.

Geophysical activity, in terms of crew-months, has shown a generally downward trend since 1952, which continued despite improved conditions in some other segments of the petroleum and natural gas industries. Nevertheless, even for the normal seasonal year-end upswing in geophysical (predominantly seismic) activity, the geophysical exploration companies found difficulty in getting sufficient skilled technical personnel, the loss of manpower resulting from the long recession suffered by this sector. Inasmuch as a large portion of the Western Canada sedimentary basin has received seismograph coverage, it has become common practice for exploration companies to trade or purchase records from previous operators and apply new evaluation techniques to them, thus avoiding unnecessary re-surveys. Although field work has declined, increasing emphasis is being given to such evaluation studies.

A moderate increase of petroleum reserves was recorded in 1961; year-end reserves of crude oil and natural gas liquids were placed at close to 4,500,000,000 bbl. Natural gas reserves were increased to a 1961 year-end total in excess of 35,000,000,000 Mcf., mainly through additions in Alberta and British Columbia.

British Columbia.—British Columbia was the only western province to show a substantial increase in drilling in 1961. The total number of wells drilled, including both exploratory and development wells, increased from 150 in 1960 to more than 200 in 1961, and the total footage drilled surpassed 1,000,000 feet for the first time. All of the increase may be ascribed to development of known oil and gas pools. The heaviest development program was in the Boundary Lake oil field where more than 40 new wells were drilled, and the areal extent of the field was doubled. This drilling program was prompted by the impending completion of a new oil pipeline which would allow the region's oil to be moved to Vancouver refineries. Exploration drilling resulted in several natural gas discoveries that appear important. One significant well drilled 85 miles northwest of Fort St. John produced a large flow of natural gas from strata of Triassic age and extended the known gas-productive region to 30 miles west of the Blueberry field. A very thick natural gas