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13.4.3 Production

Alberta provided over 80% of the marketable gas in Canada in 1972, as it has for at least the past decade. British Columbia continued to supply about 15%, a level reached in 1967. Production in both provinces has continued to expand since the inception of the interprovincial pipelines and toward the end of 1973 additional stimulus was provided by the increased pricing policies of the provincial governments. Production from the other natural gas producing provinces has remained static or declined.

In 1972, the Pointed Mountain field in the southwestern corner of the Northwest Territories came into production as a new Canadian source. This field now delivers approximately 2.5 MMcf a month into the Westcoast Transmission Company system for markets in British Columbia.

13.4.4 Transportation

The authorization of large-volume gas removal from British Columbia and Alberta beginning in the mid-1950s, led to the construction of the first major gas transmission lines in Canada. Today, the complete system serves the major Canadian centres of population from Vancouver to Montreal and transports gas to the international border for US markets in various areas from California to New England. The next expansion of the system will be directed to the opening up of Arctic gas resources. The initial economic, engineering and environmental studies for a Mackenzie Valley gas pipeline were completed in 1973 in preparation for filing before Canadian and US regulatory authorities in the spring of 1974. Research was also being carried out into the feasibility of transporting natural gas from the Arctic islands.

Most of the Canadian natural gas now being produced must be processed before it can be considered marketable. Only about 10% of the supply is marketed directly from the wellhead into a distribution or transmission line. Gathering lines take raw gas from the producing wells to a collection point on a transmission system or to the inlet of a gas processing plant. Transmission systems receive marketable gas from field gathering lines or plants and transport it through large-diameter pipelines to Canadian distribution companies or to interconnected US transmission pipelines at the international border. Distribution systems serve the ultimate customers in the centres of population. With the introduction in recent years of the PVC (polyvinylchloride) small-diameter pipe, distribution companies — especially in the western provinces — have been rapidly extending their service to rural customers by means of this easily laid durable pipe. At the end of 1972, a total of 67,300 miles of pipeline were in opera-