

from the Athabasca tar sands contributed 50,500 b/d in 1973. The Alberta Energy Resources Conservation Board (AERCB) estimated that the 1972 adjusted wellhead capacity was 1.63 million b/d which meant that about 72% of the province's capability was being utilized at the end of 1972. Alberta's production capability was almost utilized to capacity in 1973.

Exploratory and development drilling footages increased substantially in Alberta in 1973, partly due to provincial incentive programs but primarily because of substantial increases in field prices for both oil and gas. Drilling statistics show that development drilling increased 36% to 6.73 million ft and exploratory drilling increased 16% to 5.97 million ft. Despite the increased efforts, no large oil discoveries were made in 1973.

The shallow gas-bearing formations of southern Alberta continued to be the principal target for explorers in the province and several discoveries were recorded in that area. The drilling program to evaluate the British Block, which was formerly reserved for military training, got under way late in 1973. Evaluation of the 8,000-square-mile area is being conducted by a provincially funded drilling program under the direction of the Suffield Evaluation Committee of the Alberta government. By 1973, 53 successful gas wells had been drilled out of an ultimate planned total of 78. The Block, which is almost completely surrounded by gas-producing fields, is estimated to contain about 4 MMMMcf of gas reserves.

According to an appraisal of Alberta's oil sands completed in 1973 by the Alberta Energy Resources Conservation Board (AERCB), there is an ultimate in place reserve of crude bitumen of 1,000 billion bbl of which 250 billion bbl are recoverable by known methods of technology. The bulk of the recoverable reserves are located in the Athabasca deposit with the remainder distributed between the Cold Lake, Peace River, Wabasca and Buffalo Head Hills deposits. Of the 250 billion bbl of recoverable synthetic crude oil, only 26.5 billion bbl are amenable to open-cast mining methods and all of this is located in the Athabasca deposit. The remaining 223.5 billion bbl are expected to be eventually recovered by in situ recovery techniques which are still in the experimental stage of development. At the present time there are two firm proposals for major open-cast bituminous sands projects in Alberta. These are the Syncrude Canada Ltd.'s proposal which received final approval from the Alberta government in September 1973, and Shell Canada Limited's project on which final approval is still pending. Construction on the proposed 125,000 b/d Syncrude project was scheduled to commence in 1974 and be completed by 1978.

Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan's crude oil production declined by 1,800 b/d to 235,000 b/d in 1973, accounting for 13% of the Canadian total. Marketable natural gas production, at 65.9 MMMcf accounted for 2.1% of total Canadian production. Total footage drilled in Saskatchewan amounted to 1.75 million ft compared with 1.81 million in 1972. There were no significant oil or gas discoveries made in Saskatchewan during 1973.

British Columbia. In 1973 production of crude oil in British Columbia declined by 7,000 b/d to 58,000 b/d and represented 4% of total national production. Despite a substantial reduction in production at the Beaver River gas field, one of the province's major producing fields, net withdrawals of natural gas increased by 17% to 506 MMMcf, or 16% of total domestic production.

Both exploratory and development drilling decreased in 1973. Exploratory drilling at 566,500 ft declined by 134,463 ft from the previous year and development drilling declined by 140,566 ft to 301,421 ft. There were no significant oil discoveries made in 1973 but several significant gas discoveries were recorded, four of which may eventually prove to be major fields. These discoveries were made in the Grizzly Valley area, the Cecil Lake area, the Kotcho Lake area and Nelson Forks area, all in northeastern British Columbia.

Manitoba. Production of crude oil in Manitoba amounted to 14,000 b/d in 1973, down slightly from 1972. All fields in Manitoba are producing at maximum capability. There is no natural gas production in Manitoba. Because of a 25-well exploratory program by Asamara Oil Corporation Ltd., 16 wells were completed in 1973 compared to six in 1972. No commercial successes were recorded.

Yukon Territory, Northwest Territories and Arctic islands. Crude oil production north of the 60th parallel is confined to the Norman Wells field in the Northwest Territories. Oil from this field is processed in a small local refinery which serves local markets. Natural gas