

After the Trans-Canada gas pipeline is completed, this plant will be enlarged and be capable of producing at least three times as much sulphur. In the near future western Canada may produce over one-half million tons of sulphur annually, a potential that is attracting the attention of major sulphur producing companies in other countries.

Lithium.—A great deal of interest is at present being taken in lithium compounds and much of that interest is centred in developments in Canada. A very large deposit of spodumene—lithium aluminium silicate—has been proved by Quebec Lithium Corporation in the Amos-Val d'Or area of Quebec. A 525 foot shaft was completed in June 1955 and a mill producing 165 tons of spodumene concentrates per day is now in production. These concentrates are exported to Lithium Corporation of America on a five year contract.

In Ontario spodumene was discovered in 1955 in the area between the Nipigon River and Port Arthur and several well-known mining companies are investigating those finds. In Manitoba active exploration is taking place in the Winnipeg River-Cat Lake area where Violamac Mines Limited has reported the development of a large tonnage of spodumene.

Asbestos.—The effects of the great expansion in productive capacity carried out during the past several years is shown in the record production of 1,055,000 tons of fibre valued at \$98,691,000 in 1955. For the first time the value of asbestos produced exceeded that of coal in the same period. Expansion in milling capacity is still in process by a number of the producers and preparations are being made to forsake open pit mining for the block caving system of underground mining as the open pits become worked to their economical limits.

Nepheline Syenite.—Production of this white rock, which consists of a mixture of feldspar and nepheline, is rapidly increasing. It competes with feldspar as a raw material for the ceramic industry. American Nepheline Limited, the original producer of nepheline syenite, is spending \$2,500,000 on a new mill at Nepton, Ont., to produce 500 tons a day, an increase of 100 tons a day over the present plant. Canadian Flint and Spar Company Limited of Ottawa, a subsidiary of International Minerals and Chemicals Corporation of Chicago, is building a mill with an initial capacity of 250 tons a day, whose production will come from the eastern end of the same large deposit worked by American Nepheline.

Subsection 3.—Petroleum and Natural Gas*

The growth that has taken place in Canada's oil industry since 1946 is effectively indicated by the fact that known crude oil and gas liquids reserves were placed at 2,415,945,000 bbl. in 1954, a figure thirty-three times greater than that estimated in 1946, and by the fact that production in the same period increased thirteen-fold. From 1952 to 1953 the reserves figure was raised by 298,665,000 bbl. and from 1953 to 1954 by 372,397,000 bbl. In 1953 crude oil took the lead in value of production among all the minerals produced in Canada and retained that lead in 1954.

Alberta accounts for about 90 p.c. of Canadian oil production, Saskatchewan and Manitoba for about 9 p.c. and Eastern Canada for less than 1 p.c.† The following figures show the number of active oil wells in each of the Prairie Provinces:—

<i>Province</i>	<i>Dec. 1953</i>	<i>June 1954</i>	<i>Dec. 1954</i>	<i>June 1955</i>
Alberta.....	4,504	4,790	5,070	5,440
Saskatchewan.....	760	881	1,094	1,359
Manitoba.....	102	168	284	406

At the end of 1954 British Columbia had almost 100 gas wells awaiting market outlets; Alberta had 471 gas wells capable of production and potential gas wells numbering 4,901; and Saskatchewan had 120 gas wells capable of production.

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† Crude oil and natural gas production figures are given at pp. 541-543.