

existence, and made use of their products. Old oil vats and oil wells have been discovered, affording undoubted evidence of human works of great antiquity; and in Enniskillen, the great centre of the oil spring region in Canada, deers' horns, and pieces of timber bearing the marks of the axe, have been dug up from considerable depths below the surface, in what appear to have been old wells.

The fact of such remarkable springs occurring in western Canada could not fail to attract the attention of our Provincial Geologists, and accordingly we find them noticed in the reports of 1850-51 and 1851-52, although in a somewhat cursory manner, leading to the inference that the material was only to be found in very limited amounts. In the first named report we find the following slight notice: "Springs of petroleum, called usually *oil springs*, rise in the river Thames near its right bank in Mosa; the bituminous oil collected on cloths from the surface of which is used in the neighbourhood as a remedy for cuts and cutaneous diseases in horses. Similar springs exist in the township of Enniskillen, where a deposit of mineral pitch or mineral caoutchouc is said to extend over several acres on the seventeenth lot of the second concession." In a subsequent report, Mr. Murray, having visited the spot, thus describes the Enniskillen deposits: "This bed of bitumen, which in some parts has the consistence of mineral caoutchouc, occurs on the sixteenth lot of the second concession of Enniskillen, in the county of Lambton; but its extent does not appear to exceed half an acre, with a thickness of two feet over about twenty feet square, from which it gradually thins towards the edge in all directions. Bituminous oil was observed to rise to the surface of the water in Black Creek, a branch of Bear Creek, in two places on the seventeenth lot of the third concession of Enniskillen; and I was informed that it had been observed at other places farther down the stream."

The foregoing accounts embody the sum of what was publicly known regarding the oil springs in Western Canada previous to the year 1853, at which date they began to attract the attention of adventurers. It was not, however, until the year 1857 that the material was turned to profitable account. In consequence of the very successful introduction of the new coal oils, both for illuminating and lubricating purposes, under the patent of Mr. James Young, of Glasgow, certain gentlemen, foremost among whom was Mr. W. M. Williams of Hamilton, formed themselves into a company and acquired