

the prospects for oil and gas are considered to be higher. The Arctic Ocean is the "youngest". The principal events connected with its formation occurred in the Neogene, and so we can assume that it has retained those special geologic traits which more ancient oceans have lost. The temperature and pressure in the thick sedimentary layers are especially favourable for the formation of oil and gas."

Q. "More than a decade ago you edited the first oil and gas map of the northern USSR, including the area covered by water. At that time the main deposits were concentrated on land. Has this map undergone many changes since that time?"

"The first map had an extremely limited factual basis. Much of it was based on comparisons with adjacent land areas and on the kind of geologic intuition required for any prognosis. Now, geologic studies embrace the entire northerwestern shelf of the Arctic. As a result, precise data on the geologic structure of the shelf and the thickness of the sedimentary mantle have been plotted on the map. A major event was the discovery of oil deposits on Kolguev Island in the Pechora Sea. Drilling here was begun on the recommendation of specialists from our institute as part of a major overall program to study the deep structure of the Soviet Union, including its shelf.

"The next step is research on the continental slope. This is also an area of development of continental crust, and structures found on the shelf extend this far. Today some sections of it can already be considered promising. It is believed that in the coming years scientists will be able to assess the possibility of hydrocarbon accumulations in deep water areas of the Arctic ocean as well."