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ON THE PETROLEUM SPRINGS OF WESTERN CANADA.

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The existence of vast reservoirs of mineral oil hidden beneath the rocks in the western part of our Province, and now for the first time being disclosed to the light of day, forms a subject of the deepest scientific interest, and will amply justify an enquiry into its nature and probable origin, on scientific grounds only. But when we consider the additional importance attaching to the question from the commercial value of the material; and since, in the present crisis of the history of Canada, so much study is directed to the development of her natural resources, no further considerations need be urged to secure attention to the subject.

Petroleum, mineral oil, or fluid bitumen, is an inflammable substance, composed of carbon and hydrogen; of a black or deep brown colour, unctuous to the touch, and exhaling a strong and unpleasant odor. It exudes from the earth, or flows into wells in the manner of water springs, and is generally accompanied with an evolution of gas, the pressure of which seems to constitute the force which occasions the flow at the surface. Springs of petroleum and naphtha (an allied sub-