CORRESPONDENCE

Editor, The Canadian Mining Journal:

Sir,—In The Canadian Mining Journal of February 15, 1916, you make certain criticisms with reference to Volume II. of The Petroleum and Natural Gas Resources of Canada. Since the undersigned is mainly responsible for that report, he feels it only fair to himself, his associates, the Director of Mines, and to the public, to correct the misleading impressions given by your editorial.

Nothing can be gained by more than mentioning your denunciation of the ample margin, since this is merely an opinion, and does not affect the value of the volume, except to improve its appearance. In considering the size, however, please bear in mind that Canada is a large country, having petroleum and natural gas resources in many districts, so that a complete discussion of them would occupy many volumes. The undersigned and his associates, at the request of the Director of Mines, and at financial sacrifice to themselves, cheerfully compiled Volume II. as a summary of conditions affecting oil and gas development in the Dominion; and while no summary can at this time be made absolutely accurate, it is the only one published on the subject.

So far as accuracy is concerned, the title of your editorial is inaccurate itself, since it refers only to a very small portion of the Petroleum and Natural Gas Report, omitting discussions of the rest, evidently failing to realize that a few deficiencies are inevitable and do not relegate an entire report to the term "inaccurate." All Government appropriations for scientific work are too small; consequently if the Department of Mines had waited authority to pay the full value of a complete oil report, the one under discussion would doubtless never have been made. Data for it were widely scattered and fragmentary, being compiled finally by perseverance and with the assistance of various authorities.

While the oval shape of oil pools is severely criticized in your editorial, such a shape is characteristic of the majority of those throughout the world. Moreover in small scale maps it is necessary to generalize the boundaries considerably, since the collection of full data would require great expense and time. Boundaries are generalized in most preliminary reports on oil fields leaving the details for later reports when the full data become available.

The Ontario map which you condemn so severely is the first map covering all the oil and gas fields of the province, and with the exception of a limited amount of fieldwork, practically the only data available from which to prepare the map was contained in local maps accompanying previous reports, viz.: (1) a map of the Kent gas field, by G. R. Mickle, published on page 150 of the report of the Ontario Bureau of Mines for 1910; (2) the Report of the Geological Survey of Canada for 1898, Vol. XI., Part S, pages 119, 121, and 138; and (3) the map on page 93 of the report for the Ontario Bureau of Mines for 1907. The first-mentioned of these maps, by the way, does not show any of the wells which existed in Lake Erie at that time. The last does not attempt to outline the details of the fields, but the fact does not relegate that report to the category of the worthless. Since you appear to have detailed knowledge of unpublished information on the fields, it is to be regretted that you do not publish it and correct the alleged errors. You may be sure that any corrections or additions will be cheerfully received by the undersigned or by the Director of Mines, and the data will be incorporated in future reports on the subject.

As to the omissions of gas pools in Haldimand, Welland, Norfolk, and Wentworth Counties, it is important to note that certain ones were intentional omissions, since the amount of gas in certain districts is so limited as to be unworthy of representation on a map of fields having commercial value. The undersigned would like to ask you, in reference to your claim that there are "quite a number of good gas wells in Binbrook Township" of Wentworth County, when they were drilled and the amount and duration of their production. The most authentic information received here is that in December, 1914, only four small producers existed in Wentworth County. If your information is more complete than this, kindly supply the details.

Your statement that hydrogen cannot occur in natural gas is interesting. Perhaps you are right, but I would suggest that you read Westcott's "Handbook of Natural Gas," the latest edition of which contains a number of analyses made by reputable chemists which show substantial percentages of hydrogen. If further enlightenment is necessary, please note in the Petroleum and Natural Gas Report, on the same page with the analyses which you criticize, the statement that they were "reported by" certain parties, being quoted merely as contributions, since numerous analyses are important, and no appropriation was available for making them specially for the report.

Your main criticism is evidently directed to the map of the Ontario gas fields. Kindly remember that this is the first general map ever published of these fields, and that a first map of any group of oil fields is never perfectly accurate. If you will carefully read the preface by the Director of Mines, at the beginning of Volume 1, you will find, in the first paragraph, a statement that "It was proposed that the monograph should contain a general summary of all the information that was available," by which you will understand that a complete report was not expected on all fields, an impossible undertaking with the time and appropriation available. Turning over two pages, you will next find a letter of transmittal, in which a statement is definitely made that "The report is not intended to enter into exhaustive discussions of individual fields, or to solve all the complicated problems regarding petroleum and natural gas in various parts of the Dominion, since such an undertaking would require years of study and work, but as much detail is included as has been possible in the time allotted, and I trust that the publication may be of some value in the development of the Dominion's resources."

After your scathing denunciation you will certainly pardon the remark that any criticism is narrow and one-sided which devotes itself mainly to details of unpublished information, evidently known to the critic, and relating to a single province, while leaving out of consideration the general character, scope and purpose of the report. Perhaps, by bearing these paragraphs in mind, you will better understand the aims of the authors.

Yours, etc.,

F. G. CLAPP.

New York, March 18, 1916.