

over 95 per cent of the Canadian population.

### *Mineral resources*

Alberta has vast deposits of fossil fuels — oil, natural gas, oil sands and coal. The value of mineral production in 1978 was estimated at \$9.7 billion. Fossil fuels make up most of this total. In addition, swift-flowing rivers draining into the Arctic Ocean and eastward to Hudson Bay are a substantial hydroelectric power source.

Although crude oil and natural gas have been produced for local consumption for many decades, the largest and most prolific oilfields have been discovered during the past 30 years. Alberta contains over 70 per cent of Canada's remaining recoverable reserves of conventional crude oil, amounting to 5.6 billion barrels, excluding frontier reserves. Most of these reserves are in the central and northwestern part of the province. In addition to conventional crude oil, Alberta natural gas fields contain some 800 million barrels (110 million tonnes) of recoverable reserves.

Production of Alberta crude oil and equivalent liquids is approximately one million barrels a day. Of this amount, 18 per cent is consumed in Alberta, 49 per cent in other provinces (primarily Ontario), and 33 per cent is exported to re-

fineries in the northern United States.

Vast reserves of synthetic crude oil are also recoverable from Alberta's oil sands and heavy oil deposits. The oil-bearing sands underlie four large areas in northern Alberta and are estimated to contain more than 950 million barrels (137 million tonnes) of oil.

The largest oil sands deposit is in northeastern Alberta, adjacent to the Athabasca River, where the beds are exposed to the surface. The Athabasca area contains some 600 billion barrels (97 billion tonnes) of oil. Two plants, Great Canadian Oil Sands Ltd. and Syncrude Canada Ltd., are producing some 100,000 barrels a day of high grade synthetic oil.

Present estimates show that Alberta's annual production of synthetic crude oil will reach 180 million barrels (25 million tonnes) by 1985.

Abundant deposits of natural gas are found in many areas of Alberta. Total remaining recoverable reserves are estimated at 52 trillion cubic feet (Tcf), with ultimate recoverable reserves estimated at some 110 Tcf. Daily production is now about 5.8 billion cubic feet. Of this total, 20 per cent is consumed in Alberta, 42 per cent shipped to other Canadian provinces and 38 per cent exported to the United States.