



# Looking Over Western Ontario

"One of the wealthiest and most populous agricultural and industrial parts of the province."

## QUEST FOR "FLOWING GOLD" BEING PURSUED WITHOUT PAUSE IN WESTERN ONTARIO

Occasional Gusher of Oil and Fairly Steady Production From Known Deposits Spur Petroleum Hunters On In Their Work.

BY T. R. F.

The story of the quest for "flowing gold" in Western Ontario is not without romance. The search for oil that has been going on in the southwestern peninsula for the best part of a century makes a story as thrilling as any drama. But that story has yet to be written. In the dispatches and reports published from time to time concerning oil-drilling operations in Ontario, little but the bare facts are revealed. Only shreds and patches of the human interest underlying the search are told; the blasted hopes, the conflict with nature against terrible odds, the occasional triumph. The connected tale of all this has yet to be penned by some old-time steved in the annals of petroleum.

Yet something of unusual interest to the layman is to be gained by perusal of a blue book, recently published by the Ontario department of mines under the headship of Hon. Charles McCrea, under the dry-as-dust title of "Oil Production in Ontario, 1922." For some such certain, for one thing, with its scientific data, and graphs of oil-bearing strata, it convinces the ordinary reader that Ontario has a real asset in its petroleum deposits and in its prospect of finding further deposits.

### THE FIRST WELL.

In 1830 the presence of oil was noticed in the swamps of Enniskillen Township, Lambton County. The first well for the purpose of obtaining and refining oil on the North American continent was dug at Oil Springs, Ontario, in the year 1830, by J. H. Williams, of Hamilton. The depth of this well was about 100 feet. Oil of a lubricating quality was obtained in a gravel bed on the top of the limestone. About 10 such wells were dug in all. This was really the first oil well in America, and dug a year before Drake's well in Pennsylvania. In 1839, although it did not pierce the limestone, the date that the first well was drilled into the rock in Canada is not so certain. Victor Ross, in his book, "Petroleum of Canada," states that James Shaw, a photographer, in the vicinity of Oil Springs, "rigged up" a spig-bore drill, operated by foot power, and in February, 1852, completed a well to a depth of 185 feet, where he encountered petroleum, which flowed over 1,000 barrels a day, and that other wells in the vicinity drilled later flowed as high as 7,000 barrels. Giving evidence before the royal commission on the mineral resources of Ontario, 1880, J. H. Fairbanks stated that the first well was drilled at Oil Springs about 1861.

Sir Wm. Logan, in his report, "Geology of Canada, 1862," page 788, states that "the production of petroleum previous to July 31, 1861, was 5,529 barrels," and on page 788, "the wells of Enniskillen Township continued to yield large supplies of petroleum during a period of six months, but about the commencement of 1863 it was announced that the discharge from the flowing wells had become intermittent."

From the latter quotation it would appear that the flowing wells could not have been drilled later than July, 1861, and if the production previous to that date was 5,529 barrels, it would indicate that the flowing wells were drilled even earlier, as the production is very large to be obtained from 19 wells in the gravel beds.

Giving due consideration to the above, it is possible that the date given by

### The Prize



This is the reward for which petroleum seekers are constantly striving. The small lake of oil shown is part of the first output of the famous Romney gusher, struck last fall, run into pits while tanks were being built.

Victor Ross should be February, 1861, instead of February, 1862.

### THE ROMNEY GUSHER.

The Southern Ontario Gas Company drilled a producing oil well about two miles west of Port Alma, on the shore of Lake Erie, in lot 188, North Talbot road, Romney Township. It was brought in on November 1, 1923. The top of the Trenton limestone was reached at 2,712 feet below the surface. The productive horizon is at the base of the Trenton formation and apparently immediately above the basal sandy beds. It was penetrated one foot, making a depth to the bottom of the well 3,560 feet, or about 3,500 feet below the level of Lake Erie. The production of oil is not definitely known, but it is approximately 150 barrels per day; it is about 40 degrees Baume gravity. The gas production will undoubtedly be great. It is increased. At present the uncaused shale above the Trenton limestone are caving and shutting off the production.

### THE 1922 OUTPUT.

The amount of oil produced in Ontario during the year 1922 was 184,732 barrels, valued at \$166,587, thus showing a decrease in output of 8,128 barrels from 1921. This quantity of oil was produced by 200 operators. The decrease between 1920 and 1921 was 3,891 barrels. Although it is regrettable that the Ontario fields are falling off, still the rate of decline is less than last year, and the old Oil Springs field, "the first discovered oil field in North America," although in its 64th year, has actually shown an increase in production for the past

two years. If the rate of decrease to maintain the same output of Ontario fields will last another 20 years.

The Mossa field shows a most encouraging gain after a disappointing year in 1921, when its production fell off 15,300 barrels from that of the year 1920. It was allowed to "rest" for a few months and the increased production shows the wisdom of this. The strata in Plympton and Dutton are doubtless due to shipping materials held over from 1921, not to increased production. The number of producing wells drilled (3) and the number abandoned (241) will explain at once the main cause of the decreased output. A contributing cause is the fall in the price of oil from \$4.00 per barrel in January, 1921, to \$2.45 in December, 1922. This decline has driven operators to cut the cost of production in every possible way. Higher wages have attracted experienced men to leave for foreign fields. Small well owners, principally farmers, who previously employed skilled men to run their wells were forced to operate both their wells and farms at the expense of reduced production. The casing in the majority of wells in these old fields is in very poor repair. With the falling price of oil it is not profitable to renew it, and many wells are either abandoned or allowed to lie idle.

In the Oil Springs field, out of a total of 27 properties, only three operators have less than 10 wells on a single property, and in the Petrolia field, 58 operators have less than 10 wells each out of a total of 93 properties. Conditions in the scattered fields such as Sarnia, Moore, Mossa, Plympton townships are much the same as in the Petrolia field. In Sarnia township only one

property has a total of 10 wells on it. In the old fields Petrolia is the only one that attracted new drilling; five wells were drilled, two of which were dry.

One new field was opened up in Dunwich Township. Two small producing wells were drilled, but no oil shipped in 1922.

### EXPLANATORY DRILLING.

Considerable "wild-cattling" was done. The well begun by Johnston & Hyatt at Arkona in Lambton County was drilled into the Utica shale, when collapsed casing caused a fishing job which was not completed at the end of the year. The Central Ontario Petroleum Co. drilled another well near Kerwood with very small production.

On Essex County the Volcanic Oil & Gas Co. drilled to the granite near Rosalia a dry hole. A new location has been made in Romney township. Mr. Bon. Jasperson in conjunction with the Southern Ontario Gas Co. drilled well in Gosfield South Township. It came in as a very small gas producer, and was later abandoned.

The Eagle Oil & Gas Co. drilled a well to the Trenton at Argente, in Rochester South township, but dropped the casing while putting it in. They are at present fishing it out.

The Midland Oil Co. commenced a well near Riderton north of London, but found the surface more difficult than they anticipated and abandoned the attempt.

The Valley Oil & Gas Co. had a similar experience at Cosetown west of Hamilton. Here 536 feet of quicksand and gravel was encountered with no sign of rock. Apparently the ancient Dundas valley extended many miles west, and has been partially filled by the great glaciers that spread over Canada and into the northern states.

R. I. Henderson finished a dry hole at Bronte, in Halton County, and began a well in Vaughan Township, York County, one mile north of Concord station, which was not completed in 1922. Some gas was found in the Huron River shales.

Mention has previously been made of the gas wells drilled in Calder, East Township, Peel County, near Inglewood. A strong flow of gas was encountered in the Hudson River shales in a water well drilled on the Gallagher farm north of Perm in Mulmur Township, Dufferin County.

The Canadian Oil fields, Limited, after drilling on the Matilda River, Temuncumh Township, Simcoe County—a dry hole.

Captain C. M. McCarthy on December 27, 1923, completed the test well he set out to drill on the Matilda River, Northern Ontario. This well is located near Grand Rapids, about 75 miles north of the Canadian National Railway. He encountered a flow of gas and a show of oil at shallow depth.

### NEW FIELDS.

For reasons already mentioned, nothing more definite than an opinion can be given as to where new fields may be discovered. The different schools of thought are each successful in finding oil and gas by putting their theories into practice. The follower of the geological and geological theory will find in Essex, Kent and Lambton counties a perfect structure along which to prospect for trapped oil and gas. The exponent of the tectonic or volcanic theory will find the same ground and in the same places typical conditions for fractures that will have allowed oil and gas to enter from below. The third school of thought, and believe in the accumulation of oil and gas by the circulation of water or hydraulic theory will be interested to know that such a theory is being put as the rock below the drift is penetrated and that several places along the north shore of Lake Ontario salt springs are found as well as the circulation of water through the Trenton limestone. It must have had its point of outflow and it would follow that much of the oil and gas is being carried in the region north of Lake Erie and Ontario in the same way as its accumulation in the Ohio field is explained by theory.

The Hepworth gas field in Bruce County discovered in 1900 and still producing gas, is 175 miles northeast of the Dover field. Conditions are very much the same as in the Dover field excepting that instead of a layer of shale covering the gas, there is a layer of cherty limestone. The original rock pressure in this field was 40 pounds.

This Black River limestone is impregnated with oil at its outcrop in New York state. Oil has been found in the Trenton limestone on Manitoulin Island and along the south shore of Georgian Bay from Collingwood to Masford. In the latter area only six wells have been drilled and very little has been proven.

A Power of Its Own.—Dr. Thomas' Eucalypti Oil has a subtle power of its own. All who have used it know this and keep it by them as the most valuable liniment available. Its uses are innumerable and for many years it has been prized as the leading liniment for man and beast.—Adv.

### BRIGHT

Glen Riesberry returned home from Hamilton. Mr. and Mrs. Robert Fleming returned home from holidaying with friends in Chesley.

Mrs. James Elliott is visiting her sister, Mrs. Cullen, of Woodstock, who is very ill.

Mrs. George Brittain and son, Bobbie, of Brantford, are holidaying with Mrs. Multhead.

Mrs. L. Craig is spending some time in Plattville.

Mr. and Mrs. M. McLeish are holidaying in St. Marys.

Word was received of the death of Mr. John Carewell, of Edmonton, Alberta, on Thursday, February 21. Mr. Carewell was well and favorably known in this vicinity by a number of friends.

### KERWOOD

Rev. R. A. Brook spent a few days at Alma. Craig returned from Windsor, spent the week-end with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Brook.

Mr. Thompson, of Barrie, is visiting her son, manager of the Bank of Toronto here, who has been under the doctor's care some time, but is now improving nicely.

Mr. R. A. Brunt, of Windsor, is spending a few days at his home after a serious illness and recent operation in Grace Hospital, Windsor.

Misses Mae and Beatrice Demary, of Belmont, are guests of Miss Beatrice Foster.

## Winter Sports In Western Ontario



Above—A group of youthful snowshoers at Wingham, where snowshoeing recently has been almost a necessity instead of a pastime.

Left—Making a jump on skis at Spohn's Flats, St. Thomas. A big crowd watches these athletes on Saturdays and Sundays.

Right—Navigating a hillside at St. Thomas.

Below—Three experts who are among the more intrepid of the St. Thomas winter sportsmen.

The toboggan slide seen in the picture on the left is much used.

## SPOHN'S FLATS AT ST. THOMAS GREAT FOR WINTER SPORTS

By Staff Reporter.

ST. THOMAS, Feb. 27.—Although not well known to the many, St. Thomas is becoming quite a winter resort for those inclined to like the pastimes of skiing and tobogganing, and every day large numbers of delighted lovers of winter sports congregate at the brow of the hill overlooking Spohn's Flats beside the courthouse to enjoy an hour or two of those thrills only experienced on a toboggan or a pair of skis. Since the toboggan slide was built on the hill last year this sport has become more and more popular with the young folks and those not so young.

All togged out in the warmest of

clothes one will see these toboggan fans leave the top of the hill and go down the long stretch of the slide and out into the snow for hundreds of yards, the farther the better, get off the toboggan and start on the long hike back with the toboggan trailing along behind.

Along with the tobogganing at the slide skiing has also become popular with the young folks and, although it is more difficult, it has even more thrills in it than tobogganing. To see a man or boy on skis even last year was something to watch, but now it is a commonplace thing to see many of them essaying jumps from the ski-jump

on the hill, and a large number of them are getting to be quite expert at this difficult art. One local lad who took up the sport this year has a 50-foot jump to his record and many of them are trying to outdistance that.

The season is nearly over and the snow practically disappearing, but while it lasted a large number took advantage of the splendid opportunity to play on the toboggan slide that was built last year by the Kewanee Club, and even people from out of town have come. Last Sunday many people from London were present and enjoyed the winter fun with the St. Thomas fans.

### GLENCOE.

The teachers and pupils of the Glencoe high school achieved a very decided success when their annual commencement was held in the Opera House here. A capacity house greeted the performance and there were no dull moments. All excelled themselves in the rendering of the program, showing the careful training by the teachers of the different departments. The different numbers and the reading of "The Prophecy" by Vesta Gist.

One of the interesting features was the presentation of the medals and the diplomas. The graduation diplomas were presented to G. Bechthold, S. Gardner, McNab, and the medals were presented to M. McDonald and F. McDonald, of the middle school, L. Irwin and V. Squires, of the lower school, by Mr. Thornycroft, of the staff.

Last year Miss F. McEachern won a gold medal in the Laura Secord Company for the best essay, open to Canada, and Miss Helen Cameron won a \$200 prize from the Family Herald and Weekly Star for the best story, which goes to show the efficiency of the school.

John Shimizu, captivated the audience with piano solos. John came from his native home of Japan, with his mother, a returned missionary, to be educated in English. Although only 13 years of age, and only in this country a little over a year, he is proving himself a brilliant student, both at school and in music. John delights in making Japanese characters on the blackboard for reuse for the pupils of the school. The boy writes 5,000 characters of Japanese.

The staff are: Mr. C. G. York, B. A., principal; Miss K. R. Steele, B. A.; Miss A. M. Gillis, B. A., and Mr. G. Thornycroft, B. A.

### THE WHOLE FAMILY WAS LAID UP WITH SEVERE COLDS

On the first appearance of a cough or cold our advice to you is to get rid of it before it has a chance to grow worse; gets settled on the lungs, and causes bronchitis, pneumonia or other serious lung troubles.

Mr. Wood's Norway Pine Syrup will immediately relieve the cold or cough on its inception.

Mrs. David Ayres, Kearney, Ont., writes: "Our whole family was laid up with severe colds, and we didn't seem to be able to get any relief from anything we used until, one day, a friend came in and told me we would be sure to get rid of our colds if we used Dr. Wood's Norway Pine Syrup. I decided to take her advice, and in no time our colds were all gone."

"Now, knowing the value of your remedy, we will always keep it on hand so as to have it in case of emergency."

Dr. Wood's Norway Pine Syrup is 35c a bottle; large family size 60c. Put up only by The T. Millbrae Co., Limited, Toronto, Ont.—Adv.

### DORCHESTER

Mrs. Brodie returned home recently after visiting for some time at the home of her son, Dr. Brodie, of Niles, Mich. The Young People's League of the Methodist Church met on Tuesday evening, with the literary vice-president, Miss Mathews, in the chair. The subject of the evening was Miss Mathews, in a very interesting talk, outlined the life of the great author, and read some of her best known poems. The speaker was Miss Smith and Etta Skinner.

Mr. and Mrs. H. Thompson and daughter, Elizabeth, of London, spent the week-end at the home of the latter's parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. J. McCallum.

Mrs. Bunley Shaw is spending a few weeks with relatives and friends at Detroit.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Dickey and family have moved this week to London, where they will in future reside.

A sewing class, under the auspices of the Woman's Institute, and with Miss Mary Phillips as instructor, is being held in the town hall and is meeting with decided success.

Miss Irene Isaac, of London, missionary on furlough from Japan, will be the speaker on Sunday evening next, March 2, in the Anglican church. On Monday afternoon at 3 o'clock she will address a meeting in the church.

Mr. Flannigan, of London, shipped a consignment of very fine export cattle from all parts of Canada come the same glad tidings, telling the same glad story of sufferers that suffer no longer.

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### CHESLEY

Chesley is now returning to normal winter conditions. London papers, for several days barred out by irregular grain service during the recent storms, are now arriving regularly. Farmers are dawning in firewood, which finds a ready market at this time.

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The courses in home nursing and domestic science, which have been given in Chesley for the past few weeks, under the joint auspices of the Ontario department of agriculture and the Chesley Women's Institute, are now drawing to a close. The courses will conclude with a banquet in Chesley on Friday evening of this week.

The department of agriculture is being given to young men in the Odd Fellows hall and students from both courses will be invited to give the banquet. During the afternoon of Tuesday, February 26, the lady students of the domestic science course paid a visit to the premises of the Royal Milling Company, of Chesley, at the kind invitation of the manager, Mr. Ramsay. The party was under the leadership of Miss Marion Robertson, of Walkerton. The students were delighted to be shown the machinery of grinding, sifting and cleaning which take place in a modern flour mill before the finished article is produced.

On Tuesday evening, February 26, an illustrated lecture on "Glasgow and the Burna" was given in the Chesley Wesleyan schoolroom by Mr. John McQuaker, of Owen Sound. The meeting was under the auspices of Group 3, of the Tuxia Boys, in connection with the lecture, singing and clean-up which took place in a modern flour mill before the finished article is produced.

Friends of Mr. and Mrs. F. F. Bullock will be glad to hear of the latter's safe arrival in Jamaica on February 15, after two weeks' journey.

The married men of Otterville played hockey in Norwich against the single men of Norwich on Monday evening.

### OTTERVILLE

Rev. Carr, of Brantford, is conducting a series of nightly revival services in the Baptist church here.

The mail trains were so tied up on account of the storms last week that Otterville was forced to go without mail from Tuesday until Saturday.

Wm. Henry, of Toronto, was a weekend visitor at the home of F. A. Williams.

Charles Furlong, of Furlong & Furlong, Windsor, is visiting his parents, Mr. and Mrs. M. Furlong, of this place. F. F. Yair is spending a couple of days in Toronto.

A Sunday school class of the Methodist Sunday school served tea in the basement of their church on Saturday afternoon last.

Friends of Mr. and Mrs. F. F. Bullock will be glad to hear of the latter's safe arrival in Jamaica on February 15, after two weeks' journey.

## French Village In Heart of Kent County

In the southwest of Kent is situated a thriving French village, known to-day as Paincourt. In visiting this little center it is learned that the early inhabitants were among the pioneers who suffered the greatest privations in the early days. The very name of the village originated from the terrible starvation from which the band suffered. Pain Court ("short bread"), was in those days commonly applied to any place where hard times existed, and the inhabitants of Pain Court knew full well the meaning of the term.

In reviewing the history of this village one discovers that the first white settlers arrived in 1792, and were a Mr. Parson, from Pennsylvania, and J. W. Dolzen, from Holland. At that time there were immense forests and a few roving Indians wandered about. About 25 years later, in 1815, two French families, by the name of Baby and Paquette, arrived and settled north-west of the river. Soon more French families followed and selected farms, partly wooded and partly low, in order that they might grow a little grain and from the tall timbers hew a home for themselves. The Government was requested to make the survey and 173 acres were taken up. The first name by which the village was known was La Tranche. At that time there was not a post office or town between London and Detroit, and farmers had to journey to Detroit to get the wheat ground. This trip was either made by canoe or a cart and team of oxen and required at least one week. Some who could not afford to go simply used a rustic and stumpy but flour made in this way was very coarse. The leaves were very small and the settlers were many times starving for bread, hence the name "Pain Court."

Soon after the settlers arrived in this vicinity the bishop sent missionaries to them and three acres were purchased for church purposes and a cemetery. This was bought at the price of \$50. In 1851 the Bishop Charbonnel made preparations for the building of a chapel, as previously service had to be conducted in the homes. At this time the Government was asked for a post office, called "The Immaculate Conception," as this name was not approved, the name Dover South was given for a time, although many of the settlers continued to call it Pain Court. The chapel which was erected served as a school, but this was not conducted as an ordinary school, for Father Raynel, the priest, had to conduct a school of catechism. In visiting his people he had to walk or, if the settlers came for him on horseback, he could travel in this way, without a horse or blanket. He was not allowed a horse. Wagons or buggies were unknown and could not have been used. The village had been fortunate enough to have the money to purchase one, for the roads were too narrow.

Though these people were poor in worldly goods they reared large families, and the population grew from 20 in 1815, to 2,000 in 1851. In 1911, through the efforts of Bishop Fallon, a fine church, valued at \$50,000, was erected. During the past 20 years wonderful progress has been made in the vicinity of Pain Court. Some few years ago the inhabitants were successful in getting their village post office named Pain Court, written as one word. Practically every farmer in this vicinity has an automobile, and a splendid paved road stretches from Paincourt to the City of Chatham. An electric railway also runs to the City of Chatham. Although the first telephone was installed in 1903, in the home of A. Cheff, and was a novelty, to-day every home practically enjoys this convenience.

Farms in the district are valued at \$300 an acre and all this wonderful change in conditions has been due in a very large extent to the developing of the sugar beet industry during the past 15 years.

There are 76 families in the village and the population is 2,000. The village is situated on the shore of Lake Erie, and is a beautiful spot. The village is a thriving center of the French community in Kent County.

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