

Peace River Oil

By J. J. RUTLEDGE.

This is the fourth successive year of drilling for crude oil in Peace River, Alberta, and the deepest depth attained to date is 1,155 feet. During the four years referred to six wells have been put down with not a dry hole in the lot. In more than one well the oil rose of its own pressure to a height of 425 feet in the well. One well is estimated by the driller at over 100 bbls. daily capacity.

These six wells cover a distance of about fifteen miles in a straight line from north to south and along the banks of the Peace River.

In the spring of 1916 the first well was drilled to a depth of 1,135 feet. At 930 ft. the oil producing sands were encountered, showing 70 feet of productive oil sands. At the depth of 1,100 feet salt water was struck which stopped further drilling on that well beyond the 1,135 ft. level.

The spring of the following year (being 1917) the second well was drilled, and on the 11th day of October the oil sands were reached at the 962 ft. level (this well being at a point one and a half miles south of well No. 1.)

When the drill had entered the oil sands to a depth of 17 feet in the sands, the oil rose on the first day to a height of 40 feet in well. The second day oil rose to a height of 90 feet in the well, and the driller gave it as his opinion, considering the rapidity with which the oil entered the well, that the well would bale 50 bbls. or pump 100 bbls. each 24 hours. Drilling was continued on down in the oil producing sands of this same well, No. 2, till the depth of 1,032 feet was reached, thereby making in all 70 feet of continuous oil producing sands. The oil here rose to a height of 425 feet in the well. With the above estimate of the driller to go from as a guide one may estimate the probable production with the oil at the 425 ft. level in the well. The 100 bbl. estimate taken from driller's statement of oil at time of being 90 feet in well on 13th day of October, 1917.

Not satisfied with this remarkable showing of oil at so shallow a depth, the company, or some other person or persons, in authority, decided to go on further down with the drill in order to reach what is persistently believed will be found the Great Sea of Oil below, and at the 1,085 ft. level entered salt water which continued on down to the 1,125 ft. level. Here the casing was set in eight feet of solid sandstone and water was shut off successfully. It being now well on into cold weather, December, work was stopped for the short winter spell. During this interim the salt water broke the casing at the collar and let water into the well. The weather being cold it was impossible to shut it off. The next best thing to do was to move location again during winter, and the outfit was moved to a point six miles further south and still on the bank of the Peace River. Work was started during the summer of 1918 on well Number 3, with the result that at about same depth, 962 ft., the oil has been encountered, and it is hoped that better luck will follow this well than that which overtook the first two wells.

Across the river a well was put down last year. On approach of winter the oil was struck at 962 ft. and with the drill into oil sands for 30 feet the oil rose about 200 ft. when work was discontinued for winter. It is hoped that when the bottom of the oil sands is reached that a pump will be placed on the well and actual production capacity ascertained.

One mile south of this last mentioned well another plant has been installed. The drills are down some 200 ft. This summer good results are looked for here.

Two miles further south and on the same side of river bank a rig was working. At closing time for winter season last fall approximately 900 feet had been drilled.

On the opposite bank and on the east side of the river is another well down 1,155 feet and into oil. The operators have not yet commenced work this spring. Six miles south of well No. 3 mentioned above, and at the townsite of Peace River, is the well of the Consolidated Oil Company, a corporation capitalized for \$2,500,000. This well is now down to the 1,139 foot level, with the drill into two feet of oil producing sands. From reports, which can be verified, it would appear as though this prospect promises to be as good as the best well above described.

On the opposite bank of the Peace River from the townsite, another company with an up to date rig of the Standard pattern is operating. This company is now hard at work drilling and the well is down about 300 feet. From indications of the formation passed through, and comparison with all the other wells, the wise men in the geological line assert that there can be no doubt but that good results will follow from this drilling also. So we have in all six wells to date that have pierced the genuine oil producing formation. It only requires now that pumps be placed on the property to determine the actual producing capacity.

It may be well to here call the attention of the reader to the fact that we have now a prospected field of some twenty miles in extent, with more than promising results and yet there is not the slightest evidence of what may be termed "An oil boom." What we have been anxious for is however happening in this field; an increase in drilling activity which will demonstrate to the world the existence of an old field here in Peace River. We do not desire a premature oil rush such as has taken place in very many portions of the globe. When we ship out by rail one car or a train load of the precious fluid, or "Liquid Gold" those living at a distance will soon learn of the Peace River Oil Field in Alberta.

Another item of great importance regarding this oil is the fact that by the cracking process it contains fifteen per cent. gasoline; fifty per cent. kerosene; thirty per cent. lubricating oil, and one five per cent. residuum, in the form of asphalt, this oil being of an asphaltic base. This we consider quite good enough. The oil is Sixteen Baume.

For the benefit of those interested in the production of oil in any country where transportation is as