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SAYS OIL SHALE HOPE OF FUTURE

SUPPLY FOR MANY YEARS

Chief Petroleum Engineer of U. S. Bureau of Mines Tells of Value of This Type of Oil Source

(By Harry H. Hill, Chief Petroleum Engineer, United States Bureau of Mines.)

One reason why there is no reason to worry greatly about motor fuel for a long time ahead is that people are worrying about it. Interest in such a question at the right time, is the best insurance against disaster. The President and the Federal Oil Corporation board have done what was needed, at the right time.

We know that most petroleum has come from rather limited areas and that even from these only a small proportion has been taken out. Oil produced by gas pressure capable of lifting it to the surface when we drill holes is but a small proportion of all the oil contained in the sands. Even from the best pools recovered by the old methods is small, perhaps one-half in the most favorable conditions, oftener one-sixth, or one-seventh, or one-tenth. But a considerable part of what still remains in the ground can be recovered by methods now established as technically and economically practicable.

Producing oil from coal and shales and by mining the oil bearing sands is entirely possible. Experiments are going on in these directions, and if we ever have to fall back on these resources we will be ready. For a long time, however, the present methods of exploration and drilling, with improving processes to assure larger recoveries, are likely to suffice.

An Oil Dome Illustrated I am no draughtsman, but maybe I can draw something that will help explain. Here's rough drawing of an oil dome. The shaded part at the bottom is a deposit of oil bearing sands—with an impervious rock stratum above. A wild-catter drilled the hole A-B and gas pressure caused oil and gas to flow. After a while the gas pressure wasn't sufficient to keep up the flow and they pumped until ultimately even this ceased producing.

Nevertheless, most of the oil was still left sticking to the sand grains. Then the operator drilled the well C-D, which flowed for a time, but most of the oil was still down there in the sand. If the gas pressure could be restored more would flow. So the operator injects gas into one well, restoring the pressure and causing the oil to resume flowing from the other. After a time the flow will stop again, but still much of the oil will be left. In some fields it has been possible to obtain additional amounts of oil by introducing water in some of the wells and forcing the oil to others.

The gas escaping from an oil well carries with it a proportion of gasoline, which in the old days was lost. Nowadays it is extracted from the gas and saved, while the dry gas can be forced back into the ground to maintain pressure. One of the menaces to most oil pools is the inflow of subterranean water. Water flows through the oil sands faster than oil, and by surrounding the bottom of the well keeps the oil out. How to shut off the water and permit the oil to run out is a problem with which the engineers have long worked. They have made great progress and so increased recoveries.

In earlier times most oil producers carefully guarded all information about their wells and experiences, but latterly there is co-operation in these matters. Geologists and petroleum engineers, once divided by the "practical" oil men, are more and more accepted as guides and mentors. New knowledge is constantly increasing recoveries.

As to Mining for Oil In Lorraine they have dug shafts down to the oil sands and actually brought the sands out, like coal from a mine. But it's costly. Another mining process is to sink a shaft to the oil sands and from its bottom drive tunnels in all directions through the sands. From these tunnels small perforated pipes are driven into the sands, which drain the oil out of the sands. It flows to larger pipes back at the foot of the shaft and thence is pumped out. This requires installing an expensive plant, but in some fields the high recovery that is assured might justify the cost. I understand the process is about to be installed in a few fields in this country, some companies being convinced it is practicable and profitable.

Oil can be distilled from coal, and much work is now being done along this line. But more appeal has been made by the plan of extracting oil from shale. The shales of Scotland have been worked for three-quarters of a century, and they are almost unlimited in this country, richer in oil than those of Scotland, Kentucky, Ohio, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, Wyoming and California are particularly

rich in shales. It is just a question of the cost of extracting the oil. Congress has given \$180,000, with which the bureau has installed a plant near Rulison, Colorado, to distill oil from the Colorado River shales. It is calculated that the shales mined at Rulison will produce about a barrel of oil to the ton.

The Use of Oil Shales In Scotland they are working shales that produce about twenty-five gallons of oil per ton. The seams are from three-and-a-half to eight or ten feet thick. In Colorado are seams many times as thick and containing much more oil per ton. Reduction of shales involves an enormous mining operation, and after the oil is extracted the vast tonnage of refuse must be disposed of. So it is expensive compared with producing oil from wells.

Ben E. Lindsey of the Bureau of Mines Experiment Station at Bartlesville, Okla., is confident that exploration, better recoveries, better utilization and deeper drilling would furnish enough oil to meet all requirements for at least twenty-five to fifty years, if it could be extracted in that time. But as a practical matter this will not be possible. Within that period there will be times of shortage, when oil from shales will be needed to supplement the oil from wells, etc.

Meantime federal and state governments and the industry are co-operating in an astonishing range of investigations and studies. These activities cover such a wide field that even an enumeration of them would run into tiresome detail.

VALUE OF PROPERTY OF Y. M. C. A. LARGE

IN FIFTY-TWO COUNTRIES

Total Over Quarter of Billion Dollars, According to Late Review by National Council

Property and endowment holdings of the Young Men's Christian associations in fifty-two countries of the world total more than a quarter of a billion dollars—\$225,210,910, to be exact—according to a review of 1926 made public here by the National Council of the American Y. M. C. A., 347 Madison avenue, New York.

Of the grand total, which is the latest international figure available, \$184,033,300 is in the United States, the announcement said. Thirty-seven new buildings and additions to old ones, valued at \$15,549,000, were completed and dedicated in the United States and Pacific islands during 1926, and forty-one others, worth \$19,731,000, are now under construction.

Several occurrences during 1926 were construed in the council's review as indicating greater opportunities for co-operation between the Y. M. C. A. and the churches here and abroad, and a closer contact with youth problems.

Greek Archbishop Visits U. S. Demonstrations by the Greek Eastern Orthodox church of a desire to co-operate were regarded as especially significant in view of the conservatism of the Greek church. The Metropolitan Athenagoras attended the 19th World's Conference of Y. M. C. A.'s at Helsingfors, Finland, and the Metropolitan Gennadios made an extensive tour of the United States in the interest of the Salonica Y. M. C. A.

In the United States, the General Counselling Commission of the Churches, established three years ago to promote better working relations with the Y. W. C. A., found its ranks expanded to include twenty of the leading denominations. Dr. John R. Mott, who during the year was elected president of the World's Alliance of Y. M. C. A.'s, told the commission that the Y. M. C. A. is in a better position than ever before to be of service in putting down "ignorance, poverty, disease, and strife."

Efforts by the association to improve race relations were given public recognition when the Harmon Foundation voted the first of the William E. Harmon awards on religion to Max Yergan, head of the Y. M. C. A. work among the natives in South Africa, and gave an additional prize of \$500 to W. W. Alexander, of Atlanta, Ga., for his work as secretary of the Y. M. C. A.'s Interracial commission.

At Odds With Communism The expulsion in October of the association's representative, Harry D. Anderson, from Moscow, thereby unceremoniously terminating the work in physical education conducted by him under Soviet authority among colleges and universities, was accepted as an indication of the complete "incompatibility of the Christian and communist programs." No reason was given by the soviets at the time.

Importance was attached to the World's Conference at Helsingfors because it was the first held since 1913 and because for the first time boys under age had a voice in the proceedings. The conference spent nearly a week in efforts to "discover new and helpful moral standards" and to heal wartime differences, and closed with an expression of faith in the ability of youth to solve its own problems.

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