

First cut through drift with snow plow

The clearing of snow completed

Handling the Production of the Titan

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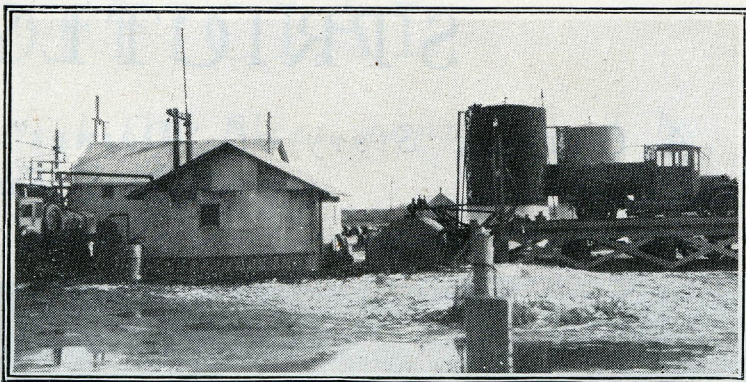
ROYALITE No. 4, brought in about the middle of October and eventually harnessed and controlled after a series of blowouts and fires, began, the latter part of December, to produce a very high grade oil at the rate of approximately three hundred barrels per day. To celebrate the occasion, Sunny Alberta staged one of the fiercest blizzards experienced during the last forty years, according to the Old Timers residing in that area. The road from Black Diamond to Okotoks, a distance of seventeen miles, with snow five feet deep, was impassable for over half the way, and Okotoks is the nearest railway shipping point to the producing field. The only transport in sight at the moment were the two White trucks of two-ton capacity that had been carrying the product from the Absorption plant at Black Diamond to Okotoks, seventeen miles, and it was possible to make only one trip each day with these which meant taking care of but twelve hundred and fifty gallons. Steel storage tanks from Sarnia and from the Refinery at Calgary were rushed to Okotoks by rail and transported by teams to Black Diamond, but were filled soon after they were set up.

Four International Trucks of two-ton capacity, and one White of three-ton, were borrowed from the Marketing Department, of Imperial Oil, Limited, and put at once into action, relieving the situation somewhat. They had to cross through ploughed fields for nearly eight miles and were forced to travel at about twice the speed for which they were designed as, not being equipped with lights, they had to complete their journey in daylight, added to which the solid rubber tires did not have sufficient traction and they were continually being stalled in the deep snow.

This article is written primarily for the Albertans now residing in South America, who have had more or less experience in the Turner Valley area, and it is hoped that the pictures of the snow covered roads, the reference to the Chinooks and the outline of the work, may bring to their minds a complete picture of the difficulties encountered and surmounted.

An attempt to clear the road of snow by using a standard road grader was made but this was not suitable for the work, and as inquiries made locally showed the impossibility of purchasing a plough capable of doing what was required, we had to make one. A plough was designed and built to clear the road of snow from ditch to ditch, obviating all danger of surplus moisture when the spring break-up comes. It was on the job in five days. During the period between the first of the year and the taking of the snapshots, several Chinooks of the calibre for which this district is noted, were experienced, with the result that instead of having snow to clear, the plough had almost solid ice to contend with on certain stretches of the road where there had been much traffic before the plough had reached that part.

The farmers along the route were more or less hostile at first. They, of course, had no trouble hauling grain with sleighs over the road that could not be travelled with trucks, and we had to tear down their fences to reach the fields through which we were forced to cross. We had a lot of criticism to stand, and were informed on many occasions that the work we were doing was worse than useless, as what road we had cleared would be made impassable again when the next storm arrived. There have been several storms during and since the clearing of the road, but it is still open, and these same farmers are now the best friends we have, as they say they have as good, if not a better road than they have ever had at this time of the year. The snapshots of the road and the unloading plant at Okotoks were taken on the fourth day of February. This was the last stretch of road to be cleared, going into Black Diamond.



The unloading and shipping plant at Okotoks

The trucks used to arrive in Okotoks all about the same time and as the equipment there consisted of a small pump and a one and one half horse power motor, considerable time was lost in unloading. A twenty-one foot tank of six feet six inch diameter was designed and equipped with a header to take care of ten two-inch hose, and a ramp was built so that gravity would unload the trucks, but still keep the bottom of the tank close to the level of the pump, as the oil, being so light, is very difficult to lift.

While the unloading tank was being installed, the plough was working every day from Okotoks towards the field gradually clearing up the road, and small contractors had been engaged with equipment, including trucks of the following makes: Maxwell, Beaver, Reo and Ford, of various capacities running from 515 to 290 gallons. Our own White trucks which had been making one trip per day, were now making from four to five. The Marketing Department trucks, equipped with lights and having

a fair road to travel, were making from two to three trips per day, so our deliveries at Okotoks reached the figure of 27,000 gallons daily.

The pressure was relieved. The storage at the field which had been steadily accumulating since the early part of the year had now been all transported to Okotoks, leaving the tanks at Black Diamond ready to take care of the production of the field for a matter of ten days should any emergency arise which would prevent the transportation of the oil. The installation of a separator increased the production, but with the organized transport of the Company's

two White trucks, of two-ton capacity, and one G.M.C. of two and one half tons capacity, and Contractor Woods' three two-ton White trucks, the latter working twenty-four hours, with two drivers for each truck, we are able to take care of the production efficiently.



The loading rack at Okotoks