There isn’t much to read in this issue of the Review, but the issue means to say a lot in spite of that. Words, after all, aren’t the only way to make a point. You can often do it just as well with pictures. In this issue the pictures show the extent and range of Imperial’s activity. They were chosen by two standards: first, for their value as good pictures; second, for the story they tell.

All but one of the pictures (the exception is the launching of the Imperial Ottawa in Japan) are the work of four photographers: Al Schoenborn, Ron Cole, Roy Nicholls and Harry Roved. They have covered every part of Canada from the Great Lakes to the Arctic Ocean, from Newfoundland to Vancouver Island, and even to the waters over the continental shelves.

Al Schoenborn is the man who went to sea, and got seasick doing it, as any landlubber should. He has been with Imperial Oil for 16 years, and when he retires next year he intends to go back to the craft he learned at school in the 1920s — ceramics. In some circles the name Schoenborn doesn’t mean photographers at all, but graceful pottery, beautifully glazed.

Ron Cole won’t reach retirement age until 1988, but he is already an employee of 13 years’ standing. He joined Imperial first in 1952, but quit in eight months to learn photography. Five years later he was back, a genuine photographer, and in the years since then he has been everywhere in Canada except the Grand Banks. His toughest job was photographing a seismic exploration party near Arctic Red River.

‘We kept shooting until it got to 45 below zero,’ Cole recalls, ‘then we went back to camp, but it just kept getting colder. When it got to 70 below, the boys brought the thermometer inside to protect it. You see, they had already lost one thermometer — the temperature fell to 72 below zero and the mercury went right out of the tube.’

Roy Nicholls, who is a free-lance photographer now, worked for Imperial for 14 years until 1967, and went everywhere in Canada except Baffin Island and Ungava. Nicholls is an Englishman who came to Canada by way of Los Angeles and his main impression of his years with Imperial is the cold.

The fourth photographer represented in this issue is Harry Roved, a free-lancer who has been taking pictures for Imperial for more than 20 years, and has been a photographer ever since his days as a reporter on the Prince Albert Herald in the 1930s, where his editor urged him to learn to use a camera. He did his first assignment for Imperial in 1947, and when this issue was in production he was in the Arctic recording Imperial’s operations there. O
The inaccessible reached in the unending search for oil

In the wild mountains near Rock Lake, Alta., a geologist in a helicopter maps the terrain as one of the first steps in an oil search. Helicopters, and the men like Wilf Pinner who fly them, are essential to modern oil exploration in such rugged country.
Probing the ocean floor searching mountain peaks

Oil is preserved in sedimentary rocks laid down millions of years ago in ancient seas. Over the millennia those rocks have been covered by successive layers of younger rocks; to find them now geologists search out clues in samples of rock drilled from wells in the bottom of rain-lashed oceans or chipped from the tilted rocks that have since heaved up to make modern mountain ranges.
Penetrating the mysteries of the silent forests

Following up the rock-imbedded clues discovered by the geologists, seismic exploration crews move into the misty bush. Blasting its silence with dynamite, they map the strata thousands of feet underground, seeking by echoes more clues to hidden traps where oil may lie.
The drill stem descends the final test begins

Despite all the maps, all the exploration, all the surveys and indications and clues, there is only one way to find if oil is there: you must drill down and see. Chances are nearly eight in ten that you are wrong. Imperial drilled 409 such wildcat wells in the last ten years – and 318 of them were dry.
Tough men doing a demanding job

Drilling is hard work; it takes strength, coordination and skill, and it has a rugged grace all its own. Its patterns are simple ones; interlocking circles in a drill bit, mud-splattered stacks of drill pipe, cylinders of rock cores. In winter the weak sun cross-hatches the land itself (overleaf) with the shadows of the frozen trees.
Pumps and valves replace the rigs

Drilling is often pioneer work; it opens up new country. When the field is developed the rigs come down and new structures take their place: arrangements of valves called 'Christmas trees' or, if the underground pressure is low, a nodding horsehead pump.
The arteries of oil ships, pipes, rails, trucks

One of the ironies of oil is that you seldom find it where you can use it. Canada's principal markets for oil products are in the east while its main domestic sources of crude oil are in the west. Connecting the two is the longest crude oil pipe line in the western world — the Interprovincial line stretching 1,930 miles from the Edmonton area to Toronto. There are shorter lines like the Trans Mountain which goes to the Pacific coast. Quebec and Atlantic markets are most economically supplied with crude oil from overseas with part of the movement to refineries in ocean tankers as big as the 110,187 deadweight ton Imperial Ottawa. Finished products go out from refineries by ship, pipe line, rail tank car and truck.
Men at glowing console panels control a twinkling refinery

Every day, 400,000 barrels of oil flow through Imperial’s nine refineries on the way to becoming any one of the 700-odd petroleum derived products the company makes. Yet this vast amount of material is hardly ever seen, and rarely handled. Trained men using sophisticated equipment control the processes taking place inside sealed vessels to transform crude oil into useable products.
New plants rise for new products

To meet demand for the countless products that crude oil gives rise to, Imperial constantly expands and increases its facilities. Last year alone it spent $81 million to modernize and expand its refineries and to build or enlarge plants that produce fertilizers, petrochemicals, building products — even polypropylene twine and rope.
The toughest test is the market

Customers are not all alike, and their needs change constantly. To serve them effectively, Imperial studies market patterns, develops new service facilities, breaks new ground with radical service station design, like the Nuns' Island station near Montreal (below), by architect Mies van der Rohe.
And in the laboratories the endless search goes on

The oil search is more than a matter of drill rigs and survey parties. Imperial Oil scientists from a score of disciplines not only interpret field surveys to find new oil pools, but develop new ways to produce pools more efficiently, new methods to wring heavy oils from reluctant sands, new ways to make old products better, and new products more effective in the largest petroleum research establishment in Canada.