Imperial's discovery at Atkinson Point on the Beaufort Sea, 111 miles north of Inuvik last Jan. 14 is not the first time oil was found there, by more than a century. Sir John Richardson, who camped there on Aug. 5, 6 and 7, 1848, found the sand so saturated with whale oil that he had difficulty getting drinking water that was free of it. The oil apparently came from whales slaughtered on the point, for Richardson described an Eskimo meeting house on the point that was "supported by whale-skulls built around its outside wall."

The occasion was Richardson's second visit (his first was in 1825, as part of Franklin's explorations) and here is how he describes it in 'Arctic Searching Expedition: a Journal of a Boat Voyage Through Rupert's Land and the Arctic Sea, in Search of the Discovery Ships Under Sir John Franklin': "Point Atkinson is a flat, low piece of ground, with a range of sand hills, 40 or 50 feet high, thrown up along its northern side by the winds and waves. When we visited it in 1825, its extreme point was a small island separated from the main by a ditch but this was now choked up and formed a marshy pond, the water of which being brackish, and fed as well as greasy, from the quantity of whale oil with which the ground was saturated, totally unfit for use. The oil had acted as a manure on the soil and produced a luxuriant crop of grass from one to two feet high."

A storm kept the party there for three days. They met a group of Eskimos and traded buttons, beads and 'any trifle we chose to offer' for ducks the Eskimos brought, but the Eskimos couldn't be persuaded to part with more than a few of the fish that were hung on poles in their village because they said they belonged to a man who was absent.

On the third day the gale that had kept the party on the point subsided, and they sailed away on the evening tide.

In those days, explorers assumed the privilege of naming the places they discovered, and in another book Richardson says Atkinson Point got its name on July 13, 1826 when Lieut. E. N. Kendall, assistant surveyor for the party that left Franklin at the mouth of the Mackenzie River to travel east to the Coppermine River, named it Atkinson Island in honor of a Mr. Atkinson, of Berry House, England. Despite the fact that the place had been known to be a point as early as 1848, it remained Atkinson Island officially until 1945. In Kendall's day, the Eskimos called it Nuvoro, which means sharp point, but today they call it Atkinson Point, just like everybody else.

Of course, all the foregoing applies only to the Atkinson Point at 69° 57' N., 131° 27' W. and not to the Atkinson Point farther east in Queen Maud Gulf. That's another story. (1)

They can go 20 miles an hour, and stay in service more than 60 years. page 8 ELEVATORS by Thelma Dickman

What life is like at 69 degrees North latitude and 60 degrees below zero page 20 ARCTIC OIL DISCOVERY by David Danischewsky
The Origins of Service

It began in Vancouver with a disgruntled warehouseman, a garden hose, and a makeshift tank of gasoline.

In the beginning there was neither service nor station, yet in a mere 63 years the thing called 'service station' has become almost as complex as the motor car itself. What we generally overlook, though—whether we regard the service station as necessity or nuisance—is that it, like the car, has faithfully reflected a certain Canadian life style, our moods, our economy, from '07 to '70.

It all began in 1907, the day the horse ran wild in Imperial's Smithie and Cambie St. warehouse in Vancouver. When the nag stopped rearing, the draymen stopped cursing and the tumbled barrels of kerosene were gathered up, Imperial's foreman surveyed the mess and bellowed: 'Look that gate and don't ever let one of those dauntless things in again!' The dauntless thing was a horseless carriage—TUH-PUTT-WHRRR, TUH-PUTT-WHRRR—that had escaped in for gasoline. That's how most Vancouver motorists got their fuel: direct from the warehouse. Most others across Canada bought it in cans from hardware stores. There were no service stations as such, although Canada then had about 4,000 passenger cars.

Since Vancouver motorists now couldn't go to the warehouse, the warehouse went to them, via bucket brigades of gasoline to the street. Finally Imperial gave in and ran a half-inch pipe line, with valve, to the curb. What luxury! More motorists came. A man was assigned to serve them. Soon he tired of sloshing around in Vancouver's liquid sunshine, so Imperial built him an open-front iron-and-frame shelter.

Finally the local manager, C. M. Rolston, erected a 13-gallon kitchen water tank with a garden hose attached and a stern NO SMOKING sign: Canada's first formal gasoline station was in business.

It wasn't an occasion of universal rejoicing. Non-motorists, especially farmers, hated everything associated with the clanking, wheezing horseless carriage. Well, after all, the horseless plunged along at outrageous speeds of 10 or even 15 miles an hour! It terrified pigs, chickens, cows and horses. Naturally the farmers laid booby traps in the roads and the legislators laid similar roadblocks in the laws. For instance, in most provinces, a driver had to stop and lead an approaching horse-drawn carriage safely past the auto if the horsemann demanded it. The horsemann usually did.

Even oil companies were pretty off-hand about the new vehicles. Gasoline was considered an unimportant crude oil product, used mainly for cleaning women's gloves. Kerosene was the important fuel. The future for gasoline and service stations looked short; any sensible man could have told you that the horseless would never replace the horse.

But of course it did. The automobile...
scooted and sputtered right into our hearts, usually on gasoline (albeit steam and electric cars had a brief fling). More gasoline stations popped up around the country. A fill-up at times was a simple, primitive process. The motorists shifted the front seat to get at the gas tank. The fact that he rode directly over a potential fire hazard was the heart of his worries, in a life bent by horsewhip nails, broken drive chains, snapped axles, incredible mudholes and small boys who heaved stones and rude words. To get the gas, from a crouched knee or a watering can. That was the end of it: no oil check (every driver filled the little oil holes and grease cups himself), no wipe of the windshield (some cars didn't even have windshields). The first formal gasoline pump, a hand-operated plunger pump, ran in 1910, product of the Gilbarco company (still a leading gasoline pump manufacturer). However, every sensible motorist still carried his own funnel and chamois cloth, strainer, for the gas was not guaranteed pure. It was also prudent to fill a spare fuel can, for stations were far apart. They offered no repair service; if you couldn't mend a car yourself you took it to a blacksmith or cycle shop. There were no restroom; wine mutes washed the kiddies to the bathroom before venturing out on a motor trip. "Station" ranged from curb-side pumps outside a store, through a glorious rag bag of architecture, from neat brick house with sloping roof to ugly unpainted clapboard shack. The attendants might be of either sex, and dressed in any garment from uniform to greasy overalls. During World War II's manpower shortage Imperial employed some girl attendants temporarily for female versions of the accused Red Baron, in their leggings, breeches, and double-breasted wide-lapel military-style jackets.

Throughout those early years "Imperial Gas" was the only gasoline in many small towns. By the 1920s, though, the motoring scene was relatively sophisticated: many brands, many stations, a half million vehicles in Canada and, in many provinces, the first provincial gasoline tax. Our love affair with the car was in full bloom. Cars were faster, less erratic and were closed in, so "touring" was less of an ordeal. Farmers had discovered that the homeless wasn't all bad; it got the butter and shelled peas away. "You had to be in the right place to find the right person" (the Historical Europe). Young guys liked fast cars to impress their current flapper (the 1920s synonym for 'swinger': she had bobbed hair, short skirts and colored stockings, and sometimes, for goodness sake, she smoked cigarettes!). Other citizens, whose portraits sometimes decorated the WANTED posters in the post office, cherished the automobile for its ability to haul bootlegging booze, swiftly toward the American border.

Service station design reflected the free-wheeling times. It was 1920s Baroque, replete lots of towers, gables, tiled roofs and dinky windows. People were growing interested in seeing what went into the tank, so in 1925 Gilbarro brought out its first visible pumps; stately things topped by an illuminated globe that spelled out the brand name or simply 'GASOLINE'. Under the globe a five or ten gallon graduated glass cylinder showed actual gasoline. Those tall old pumps were one of the symbols of the 1930s.

A small town gas station, with adjoining garage, was somehow just right for the mood of the 30s. It was simple, but so were the times. It was a rendezvous for men and boys, free entertainment mingled with leisurely business. You stood around the pumps, learning to spit and listening to the men discuss Prime Minister B.B. Bennett, the depression, sex, crops and the price of cattle, not necessarily in that order. As a car drew near, one of the knowledgeable guys, who knew every make by its silhouettes, muttered '31 Chevy' or '24 Lizzie' (one of several affectionate terms to learn about five times as long as the car) in flat unemotional tones that nevertheless conveyed total respect or utter disdain. As the car stopped you all leaned or squatted moustios, except for the rhythmic churning of teethpicks or tobacco, eying the vehicle critically from hood to hubcaps until the driver's nerves cracked and he got out to self-consciously kick the tires. Meanwhile the gas station man worked the pump and the gasoline surged into the tank with a good sharp tangy smell that complemented the odor of oil and grease. Afterwards he might let you refill the tank at the glass tank was called. You pushed the lever-handle back and forth, and gasoline came swirling up from the underground storage tank, up, up into the graduated glass cylinder until it was full, ready for another customer. It was hypnotic, and a boy could

postpone hours of homework just watching the gasoline go up and down.

Nevertheless, automobiles and service stations didn't flourish during the Depression, or during World War II with its gasoline rationing. Their hey-day came in the postwar years with the men back home, the new and old oil wells popping up like dandelions across the west. Canada went joyfully back on wheels-from 1,497,000 motor vehicle registrations in 1934 to 2,560,000 by 1960. Service stations proliferated and, for a while, could do no wrong.

Then in the late 50s the economy tightened up. Competition grew fierce at the marketing level. Price wars broke out, service and gasoline prices rose. Government enquires cropped up. At the same time, society was changing quickly, almost violently. People were more mobile, value-conscious less hapless, conscientious than ever before and, like all of North American society, the motorist was always in a hurry. In this environment, service stations were under fire: too many (it was said), too ugly, too lax in their service. Not all the changes were to the station's fair. By the mid-60s, for example, the number of Canadian outlets—that is, anything from a tourist court or an auto repair garage, to a fully-fledged service station with free air, washrooms, grease pits and racks of automotive accessories—had increased by only 10 per cent in 25 years, compared to 75 per cent population growth. Thus, service stations have not been able to increase in gasoline sales. But stations now cluttered in uneven bunches in some cities; none of them new eyesores, none more inconspicuous. The service station had to change with the new society.

Imperial was a leader in the marketing revolution. It brought to Canada the first car clinic-electronic diagnosis of an auto'sills at a moderate price. It launched the world's first "market pattern program", an in-depth analysis of a city's gasoline markets, redding communities and setting up the right outlet in the right place—anything from a simple gas bar to a major station, as the market required. Imperial stations, while retaining their simple and recognizable design, varied their faces with stone or wood, a bit of landscaping, a roof-line compatible with the surrounding architecture to make them blend into their environment.

The dealer himself had changed, from a gas jockey to an organized businessman, and Imperial took steps to improve his business career. It introduced Dealer Advisory Boards, basically a form of two-way communication between company and dealers—really business sessions where mutual problems and opportunities can be discussed and acted upon.

Imperial next adjusted mortgage terms to private-owned stations it financed to allow repayment without penalty at the end of five years. It has recently instituted a three-man board (with a neutral chairman) for arbitrating dealer-company disputes, and has committed itself to a minimum lease term of three years for qualified lessees. This year Imperial introduces a "new franchise" for the aggressive and qualified dealer. He'll have greater freedom of action, incorporating several other attractive features, to make his business more secure and lucrative. In return he'll promise to provide top-flight service at all times and will issue a guarantee on his automotive repair work.

The kind of man who earns this franchise, and the kind of station he operates, are 63 years-no, 63 light-years-away from the first man wielding that garden hose hitched up to the tank in Vancouver. Yet there's a similarity. The first one, like these modern ones, was giving the motoring public what it wanted. Which, after all, is what service stations are all about.
Everyone has his favorite elevator story, from the frightening (an elderly lady trapped for five days in her private elevator who nearly died of starvation, dehydration and pure panic) to the absurd (47 cars stuck in a hotel's automatic parking garage when an elevator drive shaft broke; the garage had no ramps, and during the month it took to hand-tool a bar of steel into a new drive shaft, the guests had to be supplied with rental cars). But you can't tell such stories to elevator manufacturers. They don't smile, they hardly ever believe the stories—they're very straight up and down people.

Maybe it's understandable. The only time most people give an elevator a thought is when something goes wrong, although it hardly ever does. Elevators are by far the safest form of public transportation. They have a substantially lower accident rate than railroads, airlines, buses, street cars and subways, even though they handle four times as many passengers as all the others combined. Chances of being involved in an elevator accident are rare—one for every 97 million passenger trips and fatalities are even more rare—one every 4.6 billion passenger trips. Elevators are probably the safest, most reliable machines for moving people, that you can find, there is a bank of elevators still going strong in Toronto that have been in continual service since 1895, and 50 years is not considered an unusual life span for an elevator.

Accidents do occur, of course, and they range from the spectacular (when a fog-shrouded pilot crashed his plane into the Empire State Building in 1945 and sliced through an office, a hallway and an elevator shaft with such speed and force that the safety devices were knocked out of commission. The lone woman operator in the elevator fell 75 stories and survived) to the quietly ridiculous (when an attendant went to sleep, fell off his stool and sprained his wrist).

But they're not the most interesting facets of the elevator business.

Elevators are:

Since the time man has occupied more than one floor of a building he has used vertical transportation. An elevating device was used 5,000 years ago to help build the Cheops pyramid. Archimedes built an elevator in 200 B.C., operated by manpower, with a hoisting rope wound around a drum. Ancient Roman ruins showed signs of shaftways where some guided movable platform type of hoist was installed. In all the time that has elapsed since then, only one fundamental change has occurred—the addition of a device to prevent elevators from falling. That subtle improvement only arrived a little over 100 years ago, when Elisha Graves Otis, a master mechanic in a bedstead factory, invented the elevator safety device and opened the doors to today's skyscrapers. It seemed very simple once it was invented—a set of spring-loaded dogs that shoot out to engage some teeth on the guide rails when the tension of the hoisting rope is released.

Otis demonstrated his safety device at the Crystal Palace exposition in New York by having himself hoisted to the ceiling on an open elevator and then
An elevator of the 1880's worth about $1,000 a car. A hydraulic cylinder in the basement forced oil up to raise the car; a governor on top of the car operated a safety device to bring the high-speed car to a gradual stop in case of emergency. Top speed then was 250 feet a minute.

Elevators that were supported by a giant cast iron screw running through the middle of the car from top to bottom of the shaft a steam engine in the basement turned the screw, causing the car slowly to rise or descend.

Most of the elevators in use today are traction elevators. They were introduced in 1903 and they're the main reason buildings continue to hurl themselves skyward at such an astonishing rate. With this elevator, lifting power is transmitted to the hoisting ropes by the friction between them and the grooves in the elevator's pulley wheels. The traction machine is mounted over the elevator shaft, usually in a penthouse so that the elevator can reach the top floor. But traction elevators are not the only kind; hydraulic elevators that rise and fall on a piston moved by a fluid in a cylinder are used in low-rise buildings.

The hydraulic elevator needs a hole going into the earth as deep as the necessary rise of the elevator, but it doesn't require a penthouse. There is no limit to the rise allowable for a traction machine, but oil hydraulic elevators stop being practical at the fifth or sixth floor.

Up to the sixth floor, however, the hydraulic elevator is extremely practical. It works like the car hoists in garages, and the operating fluid is oil moved by high-speed pumps. Service station hoists use a mineral oil with rust and chemical additives. Empire makes one for the purpose and mechanisms find the oil hydraulic lifts operate smoothly.

Rides in them are generally used for moving freight; nowadays most of them are passenger elevators. One of the most venerable elevator installations in Canada (at the Montreal Trust Building in Toronto) is hydraulically operated, using water.

The building is 15 stories high, consequently, the cylinder for the 15-story piston needs 15 stories into the ground. It is thought to be the highest hydraulic elevator in existence. The elevators at Montreal Trust are 64 years old and have never had an accident. You wouldn't think there was anything unusual about them, though. The old ones have been replaced with new cars that look and feel like any up-to-date elevator.

Other companies began making them and a number of delightfully zany designs appeared on the market. The paternoster consisted of two cars on a railless belt; the cars just kept rolling along without stopping, and passengers had to jump on and off at their floors.

There were double-deckers (an oddity for even numbered floors, the other for odd numbered floors a design that has been resurrected recently) and others.

Relieving the monotony of the elevator trips with a collection of 19th century books would be a welcome change.
in the potash mines in Saskatchewan or the nickel mines in northern Ontario and Manitoba, present problems that don't exist in high-rise buildings. In mining operations, where the cage and the wire ropes are exposed to the elements, special lubrication safeguards must be met.

First the rope, composed of several strands of wire, is treated with a special heavy lubricant before it's woven together into a cable one or two letters in diameter, much the same way in which a little girl braids her hair. When the rope has been braided together it's treated once again with a heavy lubricant before it's shipped to the mine site.

Once in operation, the rope is prey to ice and snow, as well as rain and intense heat. At the bottom of the shaft there is usually water seepage that is often loaded with corrosive minerals such as sulphur, sodium and corrosive chloride. So once a month the rope is inspected for wear and coated with a 'stranding' lubricant, several of which are manufactured by Imperial Oil.

While elevator companies say that without elevators we wouldn't have high-rise buildings of any kind, Keith Jenson, a Canadian elevator consultant, replies that 'elevator design is self-defeating that is, the higher buildings go, the more space is needed for elevators, and therefore the buildings must go higher still.' Obviously there's a point past which adding more elevators becomes impractical and deceptive.

Sighs must approach the problem from other angles—utilizing double-decked elevators where two elevators take up the shaft space for one, and combination of elevators and escalators.

Of course, there is more to elevator design than traction hoists and safety devices. Before you can have many elevators and what kind are needed in a new building you have to know such things as the work habits of clerks, the kind of time they spend on the job, the number of tenants in an apartment block, the nearness of subway stops or other public transportation facilities that influence the number, size and speed of elevators. A big downtown office building that has only one company occupying a floor, or an office building with a number of different tenants, because another influencing factor is the morning rush to work. If a building houses several companies, about 20 per cent of the people who work there will arrive on the ground floor at about the same time. If a building houses a number of companies, the morning crush will be about 11 per cent of the people who work in the building.

Elevators could travel much faster than Canada's fastest, which runs 1,400 feet per minute (about 16 miles per hour) in the 51-storey Toronto Dominion Centre. The elevators for the new 57-storey Commerce Court being built in Toronto will operate at 1,600 feet per minute. The problem isn't so much speed as it is change in altitude—they are still working on ways to whiz you up without populating your elevator. All that aside, speed costs money. To increase speed by 50 per cent—fast from 800 to 1,200 feet per minute, say, costs at least $60,000 per floor.

Researchers have found that people begin to get impatient after waiting 15 seconds, and it is very important that an elevator ride last no longer than 90 to 120 seconds. A rule of thumb is that if the elevator goes at a speed of 300 feet per minute it will take 30 to 60 seconds to go from the ground to the 14th floor. This is considered to be at the 60-second mark.

Researchers have also found that people begin to get impatient after waiting 15 seconds, and it is very important that an elevator ride last no longer than 90 to 120 seconds. A rule of thumb is that if the elevator goes at a speed of 300 feet per minute it will take 30 to 60 seconds to go from the ground to the 14th floor. This is considered to be at the 60-second mark. The elevator gets stuck and runs an increasing risk of hitting a passenger with a door. An automatic car can't get stuck or break down, but it can find out what he wants and generally gets it; and one who touches the button lightly is a happy-go-lucky type and has a steady nerve that he won't allow things to irritate him. Such a man was John Wilson, who was absent-minded and didn't care about who was grinding his teeth. He'd press the button lightly and then go home, a happy-go-lucky type and has a steady nerve that he won't allow things to irritate him. Such a man was John Wilson, who was absent-minded and didn't care about who was grinding his teeth. He'd press the button lightly and then go home, a happy-go-lucky type and has a steady nerve that he won't allow things to irritate him. Such a man was John Wilson, who was absent-minded and didn't care about who was grinding his teeth. He'd press the button lightly and then go home, a happy-go-lucky type and has a steady nerve that he won't allow things to irritate him.
PETROLIA ONT.

It was an oil boom town 70 years ago. Today it's a quiet country town and determined to stay that way.

BY ROBERT COLLINS

Drawings by Richard Garner

Miniature oil derricks stand by the road at each end of Petrolia. "Welcome, stranger," is their message. "Welcome, to big oil country."

Except this isn't big oil country anymore. It was, in its time, nearly a century ago. Oil built this southwestern Ontario town and made it famous. Oil still lies beneath it in small amounts. But Petrolia, 17 miles east of Sarnia, hasn't been a major oil industry center for 70 years.

So is this just another of those small-town tragedies, another of those dying Canadian communities, clinging to memories of used-to-be? What ever happened to Canada's original oil capital?

It's still an oil town. The accent now is on oil that goes into refineries and petrochemical plants and comes out in a thousand different disguises to slip into our everyday lives. An estimated 800 of Petrolia's 4,000 people, roughly 75 per cent of the work force, commute to out-of-town jobs, most of them in Sarnia's Chemical Valley. So, the 19th century oil capital is alive and well and living in 1970.

But this is not simply the story of how an oil town stayed alive on oil. It's the story of how a small community was faced with a common North American problem: small-town in danger of being gobbled up by sprawling urban center, or being dried up because its mobile small-town citizens were all driving to bigger communities for work or shopping. This is how Petrolia is fighting, so far with success, to keep its identity and to keep the things that are good in small-town life.

The past is written all over Petrolia's face. Many of the old downtown buildings are a legacy from the 1880s and 1890s when Petrolia had 5,000 people, seven hotels, nine oil refineries, hundreds of oil wells, the world's first Oil Exchange, and the headquarters of Imperial Oil. The townsite is a vast 2,700 acres but the original living area was squeezed into the center, by the high value of oil lands, and much of that peripheral acreage is still vacant.

Petrolia's architectural style is predominantly white frame and three...
A few blocks away is the ‘Little Red Bank’, actually a gray stucco residence now, founded by John H. Fairbank in 1869. It served Petrolia for 55 years, one of the first private banks in Canada and evidently one of the most humane toward its clients. A contemporary wrote of Fairbank and his partner Leonard Vaughan: ‘Their style suited the times and place... The quality we call human nature was largely developed in both partners... John Fairbank, had a hand in everything – civic administration, oil, politics and business. Here, today, is the hardware firm of Van Tuyl and Fairbank, founded in 1865 to serve the oil industry. For three generations there has always been a Fairbank at the heart of Petrolia’s life.

‘We must never forget what the entire oil industry owes Petrolia,’ Charles Oliver Fairbank is saying. Thick grey hair, strong, lean face, former Member of Parliament, grandson of John H., Charles Fairbank leans back in the warmth of his office, back of the hardware supply firm. The place is littered with documents and lined with ageing photographs. From them and their owner comes the story; how Petrolia in 1865 was a settlement of 300 people; how Canada’s first oil strike at nearby Oil Springs spread to Petrolia and by 1866 Petrolia had 2,300 people and nine hotels; how the first refinery (distillery, they called it then) went up in 1869 and how by 1880 the area had hundreds of wells and the town had six oil distilleries.

That year Jake Englehart and 18 others, most of them residents of the nearby city of London, founded Imperial Oil. Four years later the company’s head office moved from London to Petrolia and Imperial became the town’s major employer.

To that point it was little more than a shack town. A Petrolia schoolboy wrote a composition about it in 1884: ‘It has no buildings of any importance, they being for the most part wooden. It also has a very bad smell and visitors coming in are shocked by the smell from the refineries... And a small dirty oily creek called Bear Creek runs through it...’

But now came two golden decades. Petrolia was the oil producing and refining capital of Canada. Its refined products went around the world, seven million gallons of them in some years. In 1884 it opened the world’s first oil exchange where refiners and producers could meet to buy and sell oil at a public price. They haggled each day around the fence outside the Little Red Bank.

By 1891 Petrolia was the most important manufacturing town in Canada on a per capita basis. It had 106 manufacturing firms with an annual production of nearly $2 million.

But by 1898 the tariff on American petroleum products had been reduced and competition from across the border was severe. Imperial needed new capital; failed to find it in England and, in 1888 affiliated with John D. Rockefeller’s Standard Oil Company. A year later the Imperial Oil refinery and head office was moved to Sarnia with its access to cheap water routes. Petrolia’s glory was gone forever. Or was it?

‘My family has been part of this town for years.’ From Don Smith, Petrolia’s newly elected reeve is a sweeping understatement. He and his family are almost Petrolia and Imperial Oil originals. Sarnia, now an assistant operator in the company’s chemical products cracking unit at Sarnia refinery, has been with Imperial 18 years. His father and an uncle both worked 45 years for Imperial. His grandfather joined the Petrolia Crude Oil and Tanking Co. in 1883, which later became part of Imperial, and his company time was nearly 50 years. So says Smith: ‘I feel I have to do something for the town.’ But what does the town need and want? It has space; water, sewage, police and fire protection; a public library; medical clinic, 63-bed hospital, and ample schools. Its Lambton Central Collegiate Vocational school is superbly equipped with the latest visual aid machines and an IBM computer.

(Besides learning how to run the computer the students are encouraged to use it for optional experiments. One group of boys published The Hustler’s Handbook, a computerized dictating service listing various boys’ and girls’ interests. To their chagrin, it didn’t become a best-seller.)

Petrolia has a dozen small industries. They make gaskets, tiles, sinks, school desks, chairs, roof tile, wooden loading palkets, steel drums for the oil business (manufactured on the old Imperial refinery site). But everyone agrees that Petrolia needs more industry or it will become a mere dormitory town for Sarnia. And Petroliaans wouldn’t stand for that.

Last year Jim Cassin, vice principal of the collegiate and chairman of Petrolia’s promotion committee, circulated 800 questionnaires among town people. What did they like or dislike about Petrolia? Back came 840 replies, a phenomenally high return. Like people everywhere, they were fretting about rising tax rates. They
If the public library looks like a train depot, it’s because that’s what it was until 1937.

full of pressures: getting out a paper, resisting overtures from politicians or irate advertisers; frequently joining in the fray at public meetings as a citizen himself.

In February this year Whipp was planning a local seminar on the subject of ‘community’, with an anthropologist and sociologist from the community college at Sarnia. ‘The idea,’ Whipp was saying beforehand, ‘is to look into the whole philosophy of community in small-towns, see whether we still have it, whether it’s any good and if it is, how do we hang on to it with advancing urbanization. I’d like to turn all this talk about municipal planning away from buildings and roads and back to the essential thing, which is the quality of life.’ Whipp chewed thoughtfully on his pipe. ‘It’s a very democratic place, a small town. And the people care about this town.’

Obviously they care: the 640 replies to the questionnaire were a good sample. More important, perhaps, the young people also care. Whipp maintains that small-town youngsters are better behaved than their city counterparts. ‘In small-towns and in the country, a man is judged by how well he raises his kids. I’ve heard teachers say how impressed they are at the politeness of the young people here. And people in Petrolia are constantly being amazed at what a potent force our young people can be.’

It was a group of young geography students who trudged to 800 doors with those survey questionnaires, then trudged back to collect them. It was a quartet of Grade 13 students who last year, as a creative English project, put together a half-hour program of slides, photos and tape-recorded interviews on Petrolia’s housing, transportation, industry and pollution problems. Then they aired this presentation for local council, which caused some councillors to twitch uneasily in their chairs.

The young people, working under recreation director Myles Ceskie, who reconditioned Petrolia’s handsome old ‘opera house’, on the top floor of the town hall, so Petrolia might have live theater and Saturday movies. And last November when the local hospital appealed for blood, a hundred student volunteers almost erased the blood bank deficit in a single day.

Around noon you see many of the kids, like rocks of shaggy sparrows, around the Campus Kitchen Coffee Shop. The restaurant features ‘broasted’ chicken and Petrolia’s first public showing of modern art — a sixteen-foot impressionistic mural entitled ‘Life’, by Richard Garner, a struggling 21-year-old local artist. The man who runs the Campus Kitchen, an ex-sailor, ex-long-haul truck driver and song writer named Bruce Holt, is trying to help. Holt likes young people.

‘I came here from Toronto because I felt this was a good place to bring up my son,’ he says. ‘It is a good place. I just hope it doesn’t change. But, of course, I’m a dreamer...’

Petrolia was always a good place for dreamers. Now the young people, young in years or in spirit, are keeping the dream alive. D.

This small-town, perhaps not surprisingly, gets more cars than it can comfortably handle. A traffic survey showed that commuter traffic, local motorists, and through traffic (truckers and travellers) pour an average of 4,000 vehicles — and sometimes up to 9,000 — through the center of town in a day. So much traffic creates parking problems and worries pedestrians.

Reeve Don Smith would like to see a bypass road for trucks and through traffic, skirting the center of town but serving the industrial area.

‘The town certainly isn’t perfect and there’s no point in hiding the bad things,’ sums up Mayor George Shatslave, a businessman who has lived in Petrolia all his life except for a wartime hitch in the navy. ‘But we must also keep reminding people of the good things about Petrolia.’

Most of the good things add up to a quality of life that city people envy. ‘I’m amazed at school registration time each year, how many new parents come to register their children,’ says vice principal Jim Cassin. ‘More and more of them are fleeing from the pavement — fleeing from all the things that a city does to a kid.’

This is a good place for children. It’s a good place for all generations because it is ‘integrated’. We have the very old and the very young and they mingle. If you stand around the post office long enough you’ll meet everybody in Petrolia...’ Charles Whipp, middle aged, thickening red hair, cool brown eyes, is a tough-minded editor who never backs away from controversy in his weekly newspaper, the Petrolia Advertiser-Topic. (‘Sure, I use the paper to stir things up, to stir up community pride’). But he becomes eloquent, almost reverent, in talking about his adopted town. ‘The air is clean, and you can walk anywhere in five or 10 minutes. For most people it’s a total escape from the pressures of city life.’

Whipp left a good job on the London Free Press to become a small-town editor in 1962. He didn’t leave pressure behind. His long unglamorous days are

The oil and the hay rake symbolize Petrolia’s petroleum and agriculture economy.
Discovery at Atkinson Point

They drilled at 69 degrees north latitude and 60 degrees below zero.

The temperature at Atkinson Point sometimes falls to 60 degrees below zero. When the wind blows the cold is so intense that you can get a frostbitten nose during a 50-yard walk, and cold metal will "burn" like a hot stove. In winter the Point's expanse merges imperceptibly with the frozen Beaufort Sea. In summer storms its low sand hills are almost entirely awash. On this desolate forefinger of land at the edge of the Arctic Ocean, Imperial Oil Enterprises' Rig 4 drilled more than a mile deep last December and January to find oil.
The work began on Dec. 20, the day before the middle of the long Arctic night. At that time of year there is no sun—merely a twilight glow at noon that lasts about an hour. For three and a half weeks Rig 4 went methodically about its task, tended by three crews of five men each working eight-hour shifts: three weeks on, one week off. When the pace of drilling progress slows, there is a pause to pull all the pipe out of the hole, screw a new bit on the end, then make the return ‘trip’. Rig life is a 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week operation—a routine broken only rarely by a howling blizzard that forces even these tough men to take shelter. Occasionally, the geologists will see something that interests them in the cuttings brought up by the ever-circulating drilling mud and a sample of rock called a ‘core’, will be taken.

On Tuesday, Jan. 13, the geologist at Rig 4 ‘sniffed’ something in the cuttings and a core test was run. Samples brought up from the well indicated the presence of oil. The next day, a doughnut-shaped rubber seal called a packer was attached to the drill stem, lowered into the well and inflated. The packer sealed the hole around the drill stem so that any oil present below the packer would be forced up the drill pipe. A few minutes later oil flowed to the surface. It was the first find of oil in the Canadian Arctic.

At the wellhead, the oil was directed through a series of pipes to a nearby pit. As it spurted forth a few gallons were taken for analysis and the rest of the flow from the test was flared. The first traces of a discovery that may eventually change the Arctic literally went up in smoke.

Text by David Danischewsky
Pictures by Ron Cole

In the dim light of an Arctic winter day, electric lights burn constantly on the rig at Atkinson Point, outlining plumes of steam blowing from heating boilers. The well was spudded in on Dec. 20, the day before mid-winter, when the sun never appears and the only daylight is a glow on the horizon that lasts about an hour. When the oil discovery was made on Jan. 14, the sun was just beginning to show over the horizon (previous page). But even then the lights on the rig stayed on, drawing power from three diesel engines that gulp 1,500 gallons of fuel a day from supplies barged to the Eskimo settlement of Tuktoyaktuk last summer, and trucked the 35 miles to camp over an ice road that is white where it crosses a frozen lake, darker on land where bits of tundra grasses poking above the wind-swept snow get mixed into the surface
Arctic life goes on as usual on the frozen tundra round the
streaming rig: a pair of white Arctic foxes made their home
near the camp, fat ptarmigan bustle across the snow in their
aldermanic gait, reindeer are sometimes spotted from
aircraft flying to Inuvik, 111 miles southwest. The drillers
take pains to avoid disturbing this ecology; to protect the
tundra vegetation the rig is built on a pad of sawdust six to
eight inches thick laid over the snow and topped by a
matting of six-inch thick, steel-framed wood planks. When
the rig is moved to a new drilling location, the only evidence
left behind is a patch of grease on the snow to show where
the machinery once sat.
To fight the cold the roughnecks bundle up—two sets of thermal underwear, heavy socks, thick felt lining in their boots, sweaters, coats, overalls, mitts. Canvas and plywood screens help cut the bitter winds, and between trips to change the drilling bit the men congregate in the doghouse, a shelter on the drilling floor with a heater and always a bubbling pot of scalding coffee.

During a 'trip' when all the pipe is pulled from the well to replace a worn-out drilling bit, a roughneck stacks it in 90-foot 'stands' inside the derrick behind the curved hose that circulates drilling mud to lubricate the bit and carry cuttings to the surface for examination. At Atkinson the drillers had to penetrate 1,500 feet of permafrost; to prevent the drilling mud from melting if they inserted a double casing in the well, then pumped in a refrigerant.

Simple maintenance jobs become laborious tasks in the Arctic cold, where gloves must be worn to prevent frostbite and metal 'burn'—bare flesh freezes instantly to any exposed metal (even a zipper slide) and a sudden jerk will tear the skin off. Machines run constantly, and if a diesel must be shut down for repairs it can take as long as four hours to re-start, even if heaters are used against the biting cold.

The 142-foot-high rig, able to support a weight of 300,000 pounds, could drill a well 11,000 feet deep, almost twice the depth of the oil discovery. The well at Atkinson is the sixth Imperial has drilled in the Arctic since 1965, two of them with participants, although the company has been active there since 1944 when it began a three-year survey over 75,000 square miles extending from Norman Wells to the Alaskan border and the shore of the Beaufort Sea. In the intervening years exploration covered the Mackenzie Delta and extended into the Arctic islands, with surface geology surveys and seismic probes. Drilling is the culmination of the exploratory work, and it is still continuing as Imperial Oil sinks more wells in the Arctic.