

Possibly the geophysical tool most critically affected by the surface geology is gravity. According to Newton's First Inverse Square Law differences in density closest to the gravimeter affect it most critically. Practical ways in which gravity and seismic data can be refined by coordination with photogeology are cited, with slides to demonstrate the problems.

HELGESON, HAROLD C., Northwestern Univ., Evanston, Ill.

THEMODYNAMIC AND GEOCHEMICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SALTON SEA GEOTHERMAL SYSTEM

The Salton Sea geothermal area is in a rift valley of the San Andreas fault system in southern California. The geothermal reservoir consists of more than 2,000 ft of arkosic sandstone containing interstitial concentrated NaCl-CaCl<sub>2</sub>-KCl brines. No steam is present underground. The sandstone is overlain by shale from the surface to a depth of 2,000-3,000 ft. The temperature in the subsurface exceeds 300°C at 3,000 ft and 360°C at 7,000 ft. Thermal convection of pore fluids in the sandstone appears to be the primary mechanism of heat transfer in the reservoir. The salinity and temperature of the pore fluids decrease outward from the center of the geothermal reservoir. The enthalpy of the brines in the reservoir ranges from 220 to 275 cal/g, which is 45-90 cal/g less than the enthalpy of pure water at equivalent temperatures and pressures. Although the origin of the brines is obscure, it appears likely that they formed by evaporation of Colorado River water originally trapped in the pore spaces of the reservoir sands.

Thermodynamic calculations indicate that reaction of the interstitial brines with the sediments in the geothermal reservoir (which is below 3,000 ft) has resulted in substantial mass transfer (more than 40 g/1,000 g of water) during metamorphism. Geochemical considerations suggest that the reservoir fluids in the geothermal system are in chemical equilibrium with the mineral assemblage in the enclosing rocks. Chemical reactions between the original pore fluid in the rock and the sedimentary mineral assemblage have led to a relatively low pH and enrichment of K, Ca, Fe cations, and other constituents in the aqueous phase. The total dissolved solids in the brine have been concentrated by removal of water from the system.

KISTLER, PHILLIP S., Bear and Kistler, Los Angeles, Calif.

PETROLEUM PROSPECTING IN RELATIVELY UNEXPLORED AREAS

A definition of "relatively unexplored" is considered to apply where definitely closed traps have not been tested adequately to evaluate the potential of a geologic province. This covers a wide range of situations.

Most areas onshore have at least some geologic information available. Recent interest in offshore-shelf regions opens a new dimension of competitive exploration where commonly nothing is known about the geology.

There are three exploration approaches that apply to any program: (1) application of all scientific knowledge to what details are already known; to determine where prospects should be; (2) analogy; find-

ing geological conditions that resemble known productive situations, and (3) "bird-dogging"; searching for prospects without pre-existing knowledge or reason to favor one area over another.

Parentis, New Guinea, Dineh bi Keyah, and other areas provide examples of these approaches.

Geologic interest is led to a particular area in several ways: (1) situations favorable for oil generation (*i.e.*, oil seepages, source bed criteria), (2) available geologic information, (3) trend projection, (4) application of reasonable hypothesis where no other information is available, (5) technological change, (6) economic change, and (7) political change.

Examples of these exploration leads are drawn from Nigeria, Libya, Egypt, Indonesia, Australia, South America, and the North Sea.

KISTLER, R. B., J. C. PAULSEN, AND L. L. THOMAS, United States Borax and Chemical Corp., Boron, Calif.

SLOPE STABILITY MONITORING AT BORON

A unique seismic monitoring system is being used at the Boron open pit mine to aid in the early detection of potential slope stability problems. The system was developed in a joint venture between U.S. BORAX and the U. S. Bureau of Mines. The main components of the system are a bore-hole geophone or electromechanical transducer, an amplifier, and a strip-chart recorder. The subaudible rock noises caused by minute readjustments of the rock in the slope during mining are recorded. Stable slopes have a low seismic noise level whereas a high noise level indicates a potentially unstable slope before there is any physical evidence of slope failure. The disturbances generally increase in number and magnitude as slope stability decreases. The same technique also is used to determine the effectiveness of corrective action.

LANTZ, ROBERT J., U.S. Geological Survey, Bak-ersfield, Calif.

REVIEW OF ELK HILLS OIL FIELD, KERN COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

The Elk Hills oil field, generally regarded as the third largest oil field in the United States, is in southwestern Kern County, California, on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley. It is on a large surface anticline that extends into the valley from the Temblor Range on the west. Most of the oil is in lenticular sandstones of Miocene and Pliocene ages, and stratigraphic conditions control the position of the oil on the structure. The Elk Hills field is also Naval Petroleum Reserve No. 1 and, for that reason, production is restricted. The field is a unitized operation of the U.S. Navy and Standard Oil Company of California. The Elk Hills field has not been fully explored, but has recoverable reserves presently estimated at more than 1 billion bbl.

LAUGHBAUM, GRAYDON H., JR., Union Oil Company of California, Anchorage, Alaska

OIL FIELDS OF COOK INLET, ALASKA

Significant increases in petroleum production continue in the Cook Inlet basin of Alaska, moving the state closer to being the fifth leading oil producer in

the United States by 1971. Five fields account for a total present output of more than 145,000 b/d. Swanson River, Middle Ground Shoal, Granite Point, McArthur River, Foreland, Dolly Varden, and Trading Bay collectively have estimated producible reserves in excess of 750 million bbl.

One of 15 geologic basins in the state, the Cook Inlet basin has an area of 9,500 sq mi lying approximately 45 percent offshore, 15 percent in tidal areas, and 40 percent onshore. The basin's Cenozoic stratigraphy generally is represented by a maximum thickness of 25,000± ft of nonmarine Tertiary rocks. Mesozoic limestone, marine clastic sedimentary rocks, and volcanic rocks unconformably underlie the Tertiary.

Major structure and fault systems trend north-northeast. Tectonism occurred throughout the Mesozoic and Cenozoic and continues into the Recent as in other areas of the circum-Pacific tectonic belt. Faulting and folding are most prominent in the northwestern part of the basin close to the Alaska Range—a range which includes dioritic and granitic mountains with numerous active volcanoes.

Oil has been found in the classic anticlines. Production is from sandstone and conglomerate beds of the Kenai Group including the middle Kenai and Hemlock Formations. Faulting and stratigraphic variations in part control accumulation and fluid properties. All reservoirs contain undersaturated oil close to bubble-point pressure requiring early secondary recovery efforts. Oil gravities range from 25° to 56°API. Average daily production per well is about 1,400 bbl.

LIPPINCOTT, STANLEY L., JR., E. I. Du Pont de Nemours and Co., Wilmington, Del.

#### EXPLOSIVES FOR EXPLORATION INDUSTRY

A wide variety of explosive products has been developed for use in seismic prospecting. These products are designed specifically for the unique conditions encountered by this industry. A thorough understanding of field requirements, coupled with modern, efficient large-scale research organizations, is essential if a continuous flow of new and improved products is to continue. Conversely, the explosive user must be familiar with the many products available, including a basic knowledge of their properties, if he is to achieve maximum energy return. In addition, he must recognize any handling precautions necessary with these products and practice good safety awareness at all times.

LOFGREN, BEN E., U.S. Geological Survey, Sacramento, Calif.

#### FOUR TYPES OF LAND SUBSIDENCE IN SOUTHERN SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

Four types of land subsidence have been observed in the southern San Joaquin Valley. These have distinct causes, and generally occur in different areas.

Subsidence caused by the decline of ground-water levels affects 400 sq mi on the valley floor at rates to 0.5 ft/yr. It results from the compaction of the water-bearing deposits as effective stresses are increased by pumping, and will continue as long as ground-water levels continue their downward trend. Subsidence due to the hydrocompaction of surficial deposits is occurring on the southern and western perimeter of the valley. Hydrocompaction results when

moisture-deficient, susceptible deposits are wetted for the first time. Subsidence associated with the production of oil and gas has been observed in several fields. Also, tectonic adjustment results in the continuing northward tilt of the mountain block at the southern end of the valley.

The areal extent and rate of subsidence are determined principally by periodic releveling of surface bench marks. At selected locations in the valley, specially designed installations furnish a continuous record of compaction of the aquifer system due to artesian-head decline.

Importation and extensive use of surface water for irrigation should greatly modify the subsidence pattern in the next decade.

LUEHRMANN, W. H., Geotech, Garland, Tex.

#### OFFSHORE EXPLORATION TECHNIQUES

(No abstract submitted)

MCNITT, JAMES R., California Division of Mines and Geology, San Francisco, Calif.

#### WORLDWIDE DEVELOPMENT OF GEOTHERMAL INDUSTRY

The total installed capacity of geothermal generating plants in the world today is approximately 630 megawatts (MW), distributed among the following five countries: Italy 340; New Zealand, 190; USA, 50; USSR, 30; and Japan, 20. Approximately half of this present capacity has been installed during the last 10 yr and the success of these installations is stimulating worldwide interest in geothermal energy. Exploration projects are now underway in Mexico, El Salvador, Chile, Turkey, Kenya, China (Taiwan), and the Philippines.

Although approximately 30 thermal areas have been drilled in the western United States during the past 10 yr, only two are undergoing active development. The Geysers field in northern California accounts for all the geothermal power production in the United States, and the Salton Sea field in southern California is being developed for the extraction of sodium and calcium chlorides from geothermal brines.

The principal incentives for development of geothermal power are: (a) lack of more conventional sources in the market area, and (b) competitive economic position of geothermal power even where other sources are available. Geothermal sources generate low-cost, base-load power even at capacities under 100 MW, making them particularly advantageous in market areas where power demands are still low. Low steam pressures make it necessary to use small generating units, *i.e.*, on the order of 25–50 MW, but total capacities of several hundred megawatts can be expected from a single steam field.

All the thermal areas now under investigation share a common regional geologic setting: the areas are located in orogenic zones, where late Tertiary or Quaternary volcanism has taken place. Tectonically the regions are characterized by vertical movements, both uplift and subsidence, which have taken place on normal faults. The geometry of fault-block movement appears to be an important factor in controlling the location of shallow igneous intrusions which are believed to be the source of heat for the high-temperature thermal systems now being exploited for power generation.