

GEOCHEMICAL ANALYSIS OF CANNED CUTTINGS
SAMPLES FROM THE ESSO 16/1-1 WELL

FORTROLIG

i h.t. Beskyttelsesinstruksen,
offentlighetslovens
§ NORWAY nr.

SUMMARY

Canned cuttings samples from 1300-10,400 ft. were analyzed for their yields of hydrocarbon gases. Chips of uniform lithology were picked from ten of these cuttings samples and analyzed for total organic matter, light gasoline (C_4-C_7) hydrocarbon yields and visual kerogen characteristics.

There were no zones of notably high cuttings gas yields and none of the samples gave up more than small amounts of C_4-C_7 hydrocarbons, even though the sediments analyzed were fairly rich in total organic matter. The relatively low gasoline and gas yields suggest a rather mediocre hydrocarbon source potential for the section in the 16/1-1 well, but the low yields might conceivably have been caused by imperfect sealing of many of the sample cans.

The samples from 7200 to 9200 feet produced higher gas yields on the average than the samples from the rest of the section, and an appreciable fraction of the gas from this interval was "wet" gas (C_2-C_4). This suggests that this interval may have generated liquid hydrocarbons, but the relatively low total gas content and C_4-C_7 yields suggest that only minor amounts of hydrocarbon liquids might be expected in adjacent reservoir beds in this area. The visual kerogen was only slightly altered, suggesting that thermal conditions have not been severe enough to have destroyed any accumulations of liquid hydrocarbons, if present.

Only minor generation of dry gas might be expected from some of the shallower intervals cut by this well. The high methane compositions would be expected on the basis of the relative immaturity of the organic material, and the relatively minor amounts would be expected on the basis of rather low total gas yields from the cuttings samples.

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INTRODUCTION

Canned cuttings samples from the intervals 1300-10400 feet in the Esso 16/1-1 well were analyzed for their yields of hydrocarbon gases. Chips of uniform lithologies were hand picked from selected samples and analyzed further for characteristics of visual kerogen, total organic matter concentrations and light gasoline (C₄-C₇) yields.

The purpose of these analyses was to provide means for estimating the source character and the degree of diagenetic maturity of the organic matter in the sections penetrated by the well.

Results of cuttings gas analyses were plotted on 1:2000 vertical scale strip logs and transmitted to the North Sea Study Group with our letter of March 28, 1968. Samples that were selected for further analyses were chosen on the basis of results of the cuttings gas data.

This report includes complete tabulations of results of the cuttings gas, visual kerogen, total organic matter and gasoline analyses that were run, plus graphic plots of the various types of data. Explanations of our criteria for interpreting these types of data plus brief discussions of the results of the analyses are included.

Charges for this service work have been billed to the North Sea Study Group through our Job No. 9209.

PROCEDURE

Compositions and concentrations of hydrocarbon gases in the air spaces above the cuttings in the sample cans were determined by gas chromatography. Similar data were obtained on the gases released from a standard mixture of cuttings plus tap water after agitation for 2 minutes in a Waring blender. Combined results on air space gas plus cuttings gas were calculated for each sample. The data from the combined results were plotted graphically to show the vertical variations in total gas (C₁-C₄) and wet gas (C₂-C₄) and graphical plots were also made of the percent wet gas in total gas (Fig. 1).

Cuttings gas yields showed several vertical zonation which roughly correspond to different organic facies in the stratigraphic sections represented by the samples. Representative cuttings samples from the different distinctive zones defined by the cuttings gas were selected for further analyses. The selected samples were then picked by hand to provide materials of uniform lithologies for the additional work.

Some of the sample intervals that were chosen contained soft argillaceous cuttings dispersed in drilling mud, and they completely disaggregated when we attempted to wash the mud away. As a result, we were not able to obtain cuttings chips from all of the intervals of interest.

The "picked" cuttings were analyzed for light gasoline (C₄-C₇) compounds, total organic matter and visual kerogen characteristics.

Results of the cuttings gas analyses are given in Table I. Results of the additional chemical and visual kerogen analyses are given in Tables II and III.

BASES FOR INTERPRETING DATA

Cuttings Gas

Cuttings gas data give indications of the vertical variability in the source character of a section of interest. The ratio of wet gas (C₂-C₄) to total gas (C₁-C₄) may distinguish methane-prone from oil- and "wet" gas-prone sections. The critical value of this ratio varies from basin to basin. In Western Canada wet gas concentrations of about 45% or greater are considered to be indicative of sections that are likely to produce oil or gas with significant amounts of hydrocarbon liquids. In the Permian section of West Texas the significant ratio appears to be closer to 20% or greater of wet gas in total gas.

The significant values for total amounts of hydrocarbon gas yielded by the cuttings also appear to vary from basin to basin, and possibly must be established separately for each area of interest. Zones with the greatest yields of gas are considered to be of most interest as sources.

Oil in the drilling mud makes it nearly impossible to establish practical quantitative criteria that can be used in comparing different wells. The oil will tend to reduce the amount of cuttings gas released during agitation in the blender, and it will affect the composition of the hydrocarbon gas that is obtained for analysis. However, even with oil in the mud, significant vertical patterns in hydrocarbon gas concentrations and compositions can be established in each well. The patterns from different wells can be compared to establish regional trends or areal configurations of different organic facies within a section of interest.

Visual Kerogen

Kerogen data give two types of information. The color alteration (carbonization) provides a gross indication of the amount of thermal diagenesis that the organic matter has undergone. The types of materials comprising the kerogen help define different organic facies that are present in the sampled sections and they may indicate the source character of some of these facies.

Kerogen color alterations are rated on a 1 to 5 scale, from unaltered to almost completely carbonized, respectively. Ratings of 4 or 5 suggest that subsurface temperatures have been high enough to destroy most of the producible liquid hydrocarbons. Sections in which kerogen alteration is rated 4 and 5 are more likely to be characterized by dry gas production, if producible hydrocarbons are found in the associated reservoirs. Immobile pyrobitumens may also be found in these reservoir beds. Alteration ratings of 1 to 2 suggest that thermal diagenesis of the kerogen has barely begun, and reservoir hydrocarbons, if present, are likely to be gases,

possibly associated with heavy, asphaltic oils. Ratings of 2+ to 3 suggest that maturation of the material has progressed to the point that gas, liquid hydrocarbons, or mixed oil and gas may be produced, depending on the nature of the original source materials. A rating of 2 may be associated with either immature or moderately mature sediments, based on other chemical evidence, and hence is not diagnostic. The interpretation of the significance of alteration ratings of 4 or 5 is the most reliable of the above tentative rules of thumb.

Types of kerogen materials that are commonly recognized include amorphous, finely disseminated, algal, herbaceous, woody and coaly. The source significance of these types is not established, but there have been suggestions in some areas, such as the offshore of southern Australia, that gas production is possibly associated with woody and coaly kerogen, whereas beds rated as oil sources may include rocks containing amorphous, finely disseminated and algal materials. These observations are speculative.

Total Organic Matter

The total organic matter concentration gives a rough indication of the richness of a rock in materials that can produce hydrocarbons. However, this measure alone does not indicate whether the organic material is oil-prone, gas-prone or mixed oil and gas prone. Rocks containing less than about 0.5% total organic matter are generally rated as poor sources, but this is modified by lithology. Carbonate sequences possibly include source rocks with still lower concentrations of total organic matter than 0.5%.

Sections that are notable for their production of dry gas (mainly methane) have commonly been found to be characterized by source rocks containing greater than about 1.1% total organic matter. However, a measure of the liquid hydrocarbons in these richer rocks is also necessary to determine whether they should be rated as oil prone or gas prone.

Light Gasoline (C₄-C₇) Hydrocarbons

Light gasolines apparently do not appear in source beds in concentrations above one or two parts per million until a fair degree of maturation occurs. Therefore, gasoline concentrations give one criterion of the degree of thermal maturation that the organic matter has attained

In addition, ratios of specific gasoline compounds may indicate the possible source character of the rocks. In particular, the ratio of cyclohexane to methylcyclopentane (CH/MCP) has been found to be useful in the U. S. Gulf Coast and the Alaskan areas for distinguishing "non oily" from "oily" facies. To date commercial oil has not been found associated with strata having a CH/MCP ratio of less than 0.25. However, dry gas has been found in strata characterized by lower ratio values as well as in sections with ratios greater than 0.25.

The CH/MCP ratio is also useful in helping distinguish different organic facies that may be present within an oil-like section. Ratios all above 0.25 in value may show groupings in vertical patterns that correlate with stratigraphic zones that have distinctive source characteristics. Definition of such zones may be quite useful for correlating reservoired oils with specific source intervals.

DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

The analytical results are summarized graphically in Figure 1 and are tabulated in Tables I, II and III. Cuttings gas analyses summarized in Table I were previously transmitted to the North Sea Group. Tables II and III give results of chemical and visual kerogen analyses of ten samples that were picked to give uniform lithologies as described in Table II.

Cuttings Gas

Samples from the interval 7200-9200 feet generally gave the highest yields of gases, and fairly high proportions of these gases consisted of C₂-C₄ hydrocarbons (ethane, propane and butane). On the basis of gas composition this section would be rated a potential source of both liquid and gaseous hydrocarbons, though not necessarily in commercial quantities. The relatively mediocre total yields of gases suggest that this section is not a very rich source interval in the vicinity of the 16/1-1 well.

The generally low yields of total gas in cuttings from this well may be indicative of mediocre source sections, but it is also possible that the low yields were caused by imperfect sealing of the sample cans. There was apparently a problem with the cans or the canning equipment during the drilling of some of the North Sea wells, and many of the cans from the 16/1-1 well were not well sealed. Therefore, while it is considered to be significant that the 7200-9200 ft. interval yielded more gas than the rest of the section and that this gas contained high proportions of "wet" gas (C₂-C₄), the fact that total amounts of gas in this interval are rather low in comparison to yields from richer sections in other offshore Norwegian wells may or may not be significant.

Some of the samples from shallower depths, for example the 2000, 2600, 3200 and 3900 ft. samples, gave up slightly above average yields of methane. These yields are rather low, and do not suggest a rich section, but the high methane content of the gas suggests that the organic matter in this general interval is either diagenetically immature, or else it is gas prone in nature. Conceivably leaky cans caused the relatively low gas yields in this upper section, so that again it is possible that the section is richer than the analysis indicates.

Total Organic Matter

The ten samples analyzed had total organic contents ranging from 0.61 to 2.43 percent, averaging 1.24 percent (Table III). These values are typical of strata that have been considered to be oil and gas sources in other areas.

Light Gasoline (C₄-C₇) Hydrocarbons

None of the ten "picked" cuttings samples gave up notable amounts of light gasolines, suggesting that either the section is a mediocre source of hydrocarbon liquids, or the organic matter in this section is still diagenetically immature (Table II).

The ratios of cyclohexane to methylcyclopentane were only available for 5 samples. Gasoline yields were too low to give an accurate measurement of this ratio in the other samples. The available ratios do not indicate that any production would be limited to dry gas, but are in the range of values that could be associated with either oil or gas generation.

Kerogen

Kerogen alteration ranges from 1+ to 2+, suggesting only moderately matured organic matter (Table II). Presumably the subsurface thermal conditions here have not been severe enough to have destroyed any existing accumulations of liquid hydrocarbons.

Several kerogen types were recognized (Table II, Fig. 1). A possible vertical zonation of the section based mainly on types of kerogen is suggested by the dashed lines on the strip log at the right side of Fig. 1. There is not enough control to define these suggested boundaries accurately, but they would probably correlate with major vertical variations present in the cuttings gas as shown by the strip logs at the left side of Fig. 1. The kerogen assemblages do not suggest either an exclusively oil-prone or gas-prone section but rather a mixed oil and gas source material.

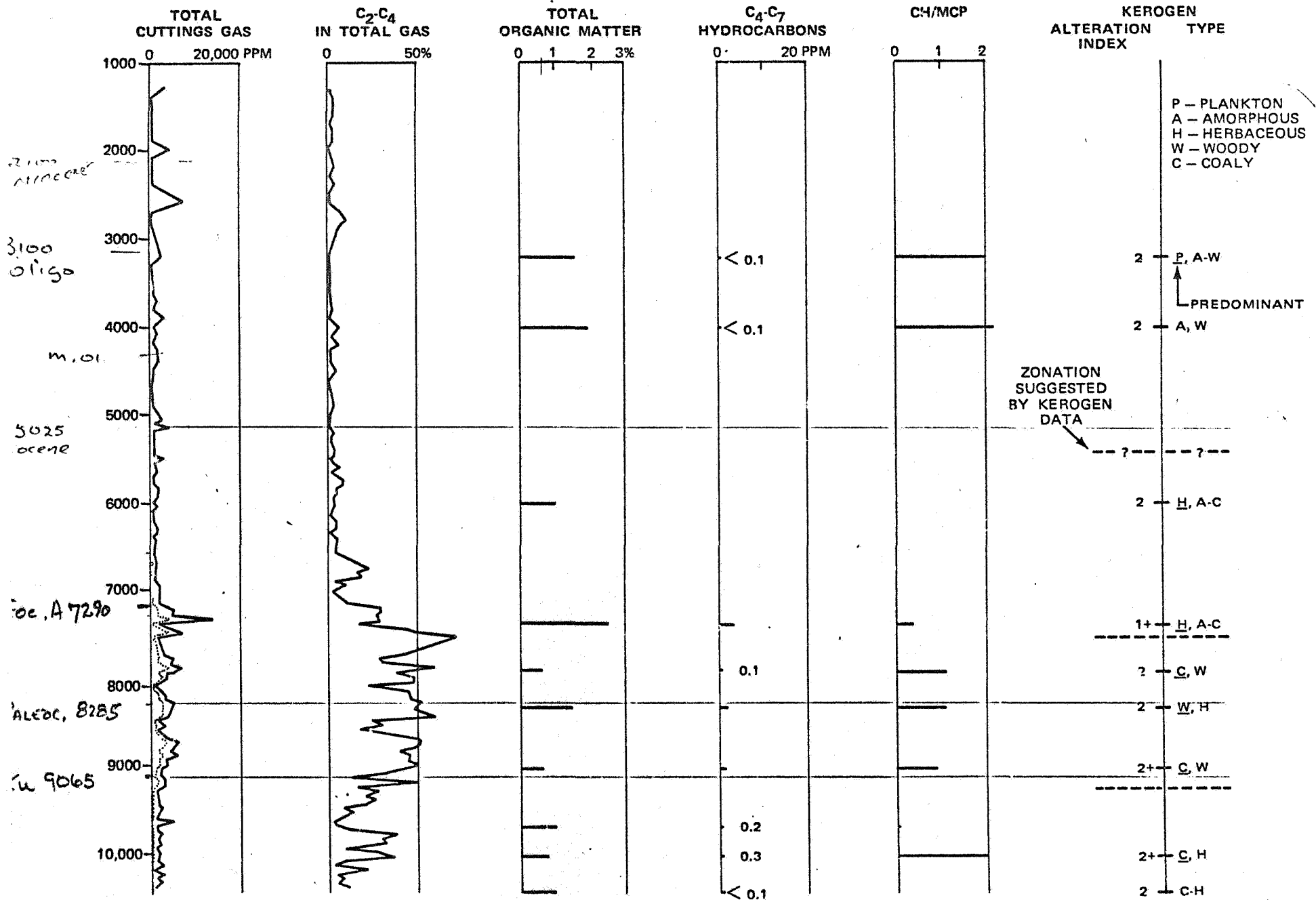


FIGURE 1. GEOCHEMICAL PATTERNS - ESSO 16/1-1 WELL, NORWAY.

C-C₄ HYDROCARBON ANALYSES - CUTTINGS ONLY

SAMPLE NUMBER	R	DEPTH	GAS CONCENTRATION (VOLUME GAS PFB MILLION VOLUMES CUTTINGS)										GAS COMPOSITION (PERCENT)										NOTES		
			ETHANE (C ₂)		PROPANE (C ₃)		ISO-BUTANE (IC ₄)		NORMAL BUTANE (NC ₄)		PENT (C ₅ -C ₆)		TOTAL		TOTAL GAS					WET GAS					
			(C ₂)	(C ₂)	(C ₃)	(C ₃)	(IC ₄)	(IC ₄)	(NC ₄)	(NC ₄)	(C ₅ -C ₆)	(C ₅ -C ₆)	(C ₁ -C ₆)	(C ₁ -C ₆)	C ₁	C ₂	C ₃	iC ₄	nC ₄	C ₅	C ₆	iC ₆		nC ₆	
542730	4	1300	624.00	1.42	2.00	1.27	7.20	11.89	635.89	1.8698	99.00000000	1.71	17.11	11.62											
542730	4	1470	522.00	1.33	1.98	2.94	9.40	15.65	537.65	2.9108	99.00000000	1.2	8.13	19.60											
542730	4	1510	519.00	1.57	2.06	2.57	10.94	20.51	509.15	3.7001	99.00000000	1.1	14.18	15.72											
542730	4	1600	619.00	1.13	1.91	4.30	15.90	27.10	616.90	4.7863	99.00000000	1.2	17.71	16.58											
542730	4	1700	556.20	1.86	1.57	2.73	8.51	14.67	570.87	2.5697	99.00000000	1.1	13.11	19.57											
542730	4	1800	781.20	1.24	2.77	4.63	15.04	23.68	804.88	2.9470	99.00000000	1.2	5.22	20.63											
542730	4	1900	829.20	2.57	6.45	5.58	13.17	27.77	856.97	3.2404	99.00000000	1.2	9.23	23.43											
542730	4	2000	1024.80	3.45	2.53	4.02	12.50	22.50	1047.30	2.1483	99.00000000	1.1	15.11	18.61											
542730	4	2100	814.00	1.68	4.12	5.39	9.28	16.00	840.00	2.4252	99.00000000	1.1	5.32	3.18											
542740	4	2200	531.60	1.96	1.92	3.12	10.97	17.87	549.47	3.2522	99.00000000	1.2	10.11	17.62											
542740	4	2300	655.20	1.50	1.16	1.37	6.20	10.23	665.43	1.5373	99.00000000	1.1	15.11	17.62											
542740	4	2400	756.00	1.86	2.54	4.61	17.46	26.47	782.47	3.3878	99.00000000	1.2	7.10	17.66											
542740	4	2500	756.00	1.33	5.76	5.90	21.31	34.30	790.30	4.3400	99.00000000	1.1	3.41	17.62											
542740	4	2700	578.40	4.87	3.66	5.88	22.67	34.62	620.32	2.7578	99.00000000	1.1	11.12	17.52											
542740	4	2800	55.27	0.88	1.71	0.90	3.09	6.58	61.85	10.6386	99.00000000	1.1	13.26	14.47											
542740	4	2900	564.60	3.45	7.80	4.93	16.73	32.91	597.51	5.5078	99.00000000	1.1	10.24	15.21											
542740	4	3000	1155.47	9.20	14.21	6.73	21.31	51.45	1206.92	4.2629	99.00000000	1.1	10.78	13.41											
542750	4	1100	1191.80	10.09	8.98	5.91	19.62	34.80	1236.20	3.6978	99.00000000	1.2	23.20	13.44											
542750	4	1200	481.60	4.87	3.15	0.32	1.42	9.74	807.74	1.2082	99.00000000	1.1	5.32	3.18											
542750	4	1300	490.80	1.86	1.28	0.14	0.51	3.89	494.69	0.7862	100.00000000	0.7	47.33	4.16											
542750	4	1400	522.60	3.27	3.30	0.62	1.24	8.73	531.03	1.5874	99.00000000	1.1	39.39	7.15											
542750	4	1500	584.40	4.07	2.94	0.40	1.48	8.89	593.29	1.4284	99.00000000	1.0	46.33	4.17											
542750	4	1600	483.00	1.86	1.35	0.71	2.16	6.08	489.08	1.2431	100.00000000	0.0	31.22	17.35											
542750	4	1700	352.60	1.33	2.34	3.01	11.45	18.12	401.73	1.7919	99.00000000	1.1	7.13	17.62											
542750	4	1800	481.60	4.87	4.04	0.32	1.42	9.74	807.74	1.2082	99.00000000	1.1	5.32	3.18											
542750	4	1900	817.20	9.20	3.76	5.43	18.60	38.99	854.19	4.3304	99.00000000	1.2	23.10	15.50											
542760	4	4000	371.40	4.51	2.91	4.65	16.38	28.45	399.85	7.1150	99.00000000	1.1	16.10	16.58											
542760	4	4100	1272.00	2.01	3.35	4.56	17.68	28.50	1300.50	2.1915	99.00000000	1.1	11.12	16.61											
542760	4	4200	548.40	3.98	3.69	5.21	18.16	31.04	579.44	5.3469	99.00000000	1.1	13.12	17.58											
542760	4	4300	1124.00	4.50	4.40	4.40	5.89	20.67	36.00	814.20	1.2082	99.00000000	1.1	17.13	16.61										
542760	4	4400	1677.60	2.65	3.30	6.39	17.43	27.77	1705.33	1.4284	99.00000000	1.1	10.12	16.62											
542760	4	4500	734.40	6.02	4.69	5.62	18.92	35.25	769.65	4.2799	99.00000000	1.1	17.13	16.54											
542760	4	4600	427.80	1.50	0.82	0.09	0.42	2.83	430.63	0.6571	100.00000000	0.0	93.29	3.15											
542760	4	4700	444.00	1.42	1.20	0.09	0.76	3.47	448.07	0.7743	100.00000000	0.0	40.25	3.22											
542760	4	4800	468.60	1.48	2.09	2.61	9.48	15.86	486.46	3.2737	99.00000000	1.2	11.13	16.60											
542760	4	4900	621.20	2.63	4.32	4.29	15.30	27.77	642.44	2.6244	99.00000000	1.1	32.41	16.52											
542940	4	5000	855.60	4.87	4.34	2.88	10.75	22.82	878.42	2.5978	99.00000000	1.1	21.91	13.47											
542940	4	5050	552.00	2.39	1.33	2.47	6.07	12.26	564.26	2.1727	99.00000000	1.1	19.11	20.50											
542940	4	5100	603.00	2.79	2.01	1.54	5.08	11.41	614.41	1.8576	99.00000000	1.1	24.18	10.45											
542940	4	5150	1319.52	7.26	2.48	1.77	6.07	17.58	1337.11	1.2147	99.00000000	1.1	81.14	10.39											
542940	4	5200	398.40	4.04	4.04	1.02	3.28	10.12	407.60	1.2082	99.00000000	1.1	40.18	10.72											
542940	4	5250	433.80	1.86	1.16	0.88	4.23	8.17	441.97	1.8585	99.00000000	1.1	21.12	11.54											
542940	4	5300	465.60	1.86	1.07	1.02	4.67	8.62	474.22	1.8176	99.00000000	1.1	22.12	12.50											
542940	4	5350	480.00	2.04	1.43	1.29	6.74	11.80	491.80	2.3927	99.00000000	1.1	17.12	13.52											
542940	4	5400	396.00	1.33	1.47	2.10	8.81	13.71	409.71	3.3461	99.00000000	1.2	10.11	15.64											
542940	4	5450	483.60	2.65	2.41	3.04	11.24	19.34	502.98	3.8453	99.00000000	1.2	14.12	16.40											
542940	4	5500	781.20	5.40	4.40	5.89	20.67	36.00	814.20	1.2082	99.00000000	1.1	17.13	16.61											
542940	4	5550	751.20	4.87	2.34	2.86	10.91	20.98	772.18	2.7169	99.00000000	1.1	23.11	14.54											
542940	4	5600	420.60	3.45	2.78	4.45	15.87	26.55	447.15	5.9375	99.00000000	1.1	13.10	17.60											
542940	4	5650	1243.20	2.65	1.64	3.16	9.70	17.15	1260.35	1.3607	99.00000000	1.1	15.10	18.57											
542940	4	5700	464.20	2.83	3.16	5.36	19.68	31.53	500.73	4.2967	99.00000000	1.1	9.10	19.62											
542940	4	5750	455.10	3.10	3.72	6.58	22.44	36.04	489.04	7.3699	99.00000000	1.1	9.10	19.62											
542940	4	5800	517.60	5.87	4.01	3.76	17.90	27.80	548.57	6.4653	99.00000000	1.1	4.61	13.69											
542940	4	5850	685.20	5.58	4.79	7.44	24.93	42.74	727.94	5.8713	99.00000000	1.1	13.11	17.52											
542940	4	5900	830.40	3.81	4.17	6.42	21.91	36.31	866.71	4.1894	99.00000000	1.3	10.11	18.61											
542940	4	5950	715.20	2.74	3.14	5.37	19.11	30.36	745.56	4.0721	99.00000000	1.3	10.11	18.61											
542940	4	6000	763.20	2.39	2.14	3.71	13.61	21.85	785.05	2.7832	99.00000000	1.2	11.10	17.62											
542940	4	6050	864.00	4.87	4.62	3.81	13.85	25.61	828.85	2.6287	99.00000000	1.2	21.10	12.50											
542940	4	6100	577.80	0.49	1.68	1.57	8.47	12.40	590.20	2.1010	99.00000														

TABLE II

Sample Descriptions and Results of Total Organic and
Visual Kerogen Analyses - Esso 16/1-1 Well Norway
(Lithologic descriptions by R. E. Hukill; kerogen by J. L. Morgan)

Sample Depth (Feet)	EFR No.	Gross Lithology of Analyzed Cuttings Chips	GSA Color Code	Total Organic Matter-%	Kerogen Alteration Index	Types of Kerogen Materials*		
						Predominant	Secondary	Other
3200-3250	54275-D	Claystone; mod.silty;tr. pyrite; tr.glaucanite; tr. mica	5Y3/1	1.53	2	P	A, W	C
4000-4050	54276-B	Claystone; silty; tr. glauconite; tr. mica	5Y4/1	1.89	2		A, W	P
6000-6050	54295-E	Shale; tr.silt; tr.pyrite; tr.microfossils;sl.calcareous	5Y4/1	0.98	2	H	A, C	W, P
7350-7400	54296-M	Shale; mod.silty;tr.pyrite; tr.mica	5Y3/1	2.43	1+	H	C	W
7900-7950	54297-C	Shale; tr.pyrite; tr.microfossils;tr.silt;sl.calcareous	5GY6/1	0.61	2	C	W	H
8300-8350	-K	Shale; tr.pyrite; tr.silt;	5Y2/1	1.51	2	W	H	C
9000-9050	54346-M	Shale; tr.silt; tr. pyrite; tr. glauconite; tr. mica	5Y2/1	0.69	2+	C	W	A, H
9650-9700	54347-H	Limestone; sl. sandy	5Y7/1	1.00				
10000-10050	O	Shale; tr. silt; tr. pyrite; tr. sand;	5Y2/1	0.78	2+	C	H	W
10300-10350	54348-C	Shale; tr. pyrite; sl. calcareous	5Y3/1	0.98	2		H, C	W

*A - Amorphous

A1- Algal debris

H - Herbaceous

W - Woody

C - Coaly

F - Finely disseminated material

P - Plankton

TABLE III

Results of Chemical Analyses of Selected
Cuttings Chips - Esso 16/1-1 Well Norway
(Hydrocarbon analyses by H. M. Fry)

Sample Depth (Feet)	EPR No.	Lithology (See Table II)	Total Organic Matter-%	Total C ₄ -C ₇ Hydrocarbons ppm	Cyclohexane Methylcyclopentane
3200-3250	54275-D	Claystone	1.53	Trace	-
4000-4050	54276-B	Claystone	1.89	Trace	-
6000-6050	54295-D	Shale	.98	-	-
7350-7400	54296-M	Shale	2.43	3.3	0.4
7900-7950	54297-C	Shale	.61	.1	1.0
8300-8350	-K	Shale	1.51	1.4	1.1
9000-9050	54346-M	Shale	.69	1.3	0.9
9650-9700	54347-H	Limestone	1.00	.2	-
10000-10050	-O	Shale	.78	.3	2.0
10300-10350	54348-C	Shale	0.98	Trace	-