

Preface

It is a pleasure for the Royal Geological and Mining Society of the Netherlands (KNGMG) as the host society of the AAPG International Conference, to present to you the first-ever Synopsis on the petroleum geology of the Netherlands. The initiative for this publication came from the very active Petroleum Geological Circle (PGK) of our Society, notably from Dick Batjes and Willem Nieuwenhuijs.

Why did it take a conference of the *American* Association of Petroleum Geologists to make the Dutch write a synopsis of their own petroleum geology? I think there are several reasons for this. The first might be that in a small country like ours, almost all geologists know each other. Some, therefore, think they know everything their colleagues know. And others who know nothing always have a friend who knows something. So why write it down at all? The second reason is the opposite of the first: maybe you know a few things you do not want your colleagues to know. So why make them aware? Or maybe we were just too busy with our own wells to see the whole of the hydrocarbon province. The important thing about the AAPG Conference is that it has provided the incentive to take off for a bird's eye view of our own achievements. And as it happens so often, when you try to explain to others who you are, you discover yourself.

This booklet offers you a taste of the extensive knowledge of our subsurface geology, obtained by a fortunate mix of chance discoveries and tenacious exploration, and of course, aided by an enormous technological development. How far have we got since the years around 1910, when the first shows of oil were discovered in the Netherlands, although "there is some doubt whether these shows represent natural oil or are grease used for drilling" as W.A. Knaap and M.J. Coenen put it in our Society's 1987 anniversary volume *Seventy-five years of Geology and Mining in the Netherlands (1912–1987)*. The first discovery of oil in the western Netherlands was made by accident during demonstration drilling in your host town The Hague in 1938, and the first real oil field in this area is located only eight kilometres from the head office of Royal Dutch/Shell. At present, 114 gas fields and 19 oil fields are producing. How long will we be able to keep up the race between new discoveries and exhaustion? We certainly will need the *New Views on Old World Oil* and *Technology leading the way*.

The first step in developing new views is the compilation of an up-to-date overview. This booklet serves that purpose. We are grateful to Ab van Adrichem Boogaert, Dick Batjes, Manfred Epting, Jan de Jager, Willem Nieuwenhuijs and Ed van Riessen for compiling this fine piece of work. We thank the Geological Survey of The Netherlands and the Nederlandse Aardolie Maatschappij for preparing the figures, and Shell Internationale Petroleum Maatschappij for their generous financial support, which made printing possible.

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