

## Ignacy Łukasiewicz w pamięci rodaków

### Ignacy Łukasiewicz as remembered by his compatriots

#### SUMMARY

The pioneering work of Ignacy Łukasiewicz in the field of crude oil processing and extraction began in the year 1853, when Łukasiewicz, who worked in a pharmacy in Lwów, first distilled kerosene from crude oil, invented the kerosene lamp and got involved in prospecting for oil, in order to start large-scale extraction of a fuel for a new source of lighting. It was as early as 1854 that the first crude oil well was started in Bobrka near Krosno, and the year 1856 saw the beginnings of the first industrial crude oil distillery at Ulaszowice near Jasło. Two years later, in 1858, at the Industrial-Agricultural Exhibition in Jasło, Łukasiewicz was able to present not only kerosene but also other products obtained from petroleum such as machine oil, axle grease, and asphalt, while the Austrian authorities introduced kerosene lighting at railway stations and in trains. The inventor of this type of lighting became known in the region (Subcarpathia) as an enterprising industrialist and an impassioned philanthropist. However, the fame that Łukasiewicz gained in the Austrian-held southern part of Poland (Galicia) did not extend to other Polish provinces, under Russian and Prussian rule. The achievements of Łukasiewicz were not mentioned, for instance, in the twenty-eight volumes of Orgelbrand's *Encyklopedia powszechna* [Universal Encyclopaedia], the most comprehensive of the 19th-century Polish encyclopaedias, published in Warsaw in the years 1859-1868.

After rich deposits of crude oil were discovered in Pennsylvania in 1859, the American oil industry developed very quickly. Thus, although it had been in existence for already five in Subcarpathian region, it was America that came to be regarded as the cradle of the industry, and Americans as its originators. Even in Poland, Łukasiewicz remained little known outside the province of Galicia. The name of Łukasiewicz as outstanding inventor was brought into the Poles' awareness only in 1928, when by way of commemorating the 75th anniversary of the first kerosene lamp, the society of southern Poland decided to remind people in other parts of the country of the achievements of Łukasiewicz and erect a monument in his memory in Krosno, which was the centre of the region where his pioneering work began. The jubilee also saw the publication of the first monograph of Łukasiewicz, written by a journalist from Cracow, Ludwik Tomanek. Another occasion to promote the person and work of the Polish inventor came in 1953, with the centenary of the invention of the kerosene lamp, and in 1954, with the centenary of the first industrial oil well for petroleum extraction. The publications in those years contributed to the name of Łukasiewicz gaining a permanent place in the memory of his compatriots as one the most eminent Poles that has ever lived.