Plate 71 Crude Oil  Oil refinery at night. At the refinery, crude oil is heated and passed through catalytic cracking towers. These are used to break up the heavy crude oil hydrocarbon molecules into lighter fragments. The resulting components, from heavy industrial oils and tars through to light fuels (such as petrol and kerosene) and gas, are separated out. The various components, called fractions, may then be collected and shipped separately. Photographed in British Columbia, Canada. (Reproduced with permission from Science Photo Library.)