

REPORT ON SUPPOSED OCCURRENCE OF OIL SHALE
AT PROSSER'S FOREST

The examination of the above district was made to verify the presence of oil shale or a similar rock which was stated to occur there by Mr. M. O'Byrne.

The Prosser's Forest district is situated about seven miles to the north-east of the city of Launceston. Access is gained by the Launceston-Lilydale road from which a road branches off at a point two miles south of Underwood. The branch road is four and a half miles in length and many parts of the surface have been badly damaged apparently by heavy loads being carted over it.

The area examined consisted of some of the private land owned by Messrs. O'Byrne and O'Toole, on the north eastern side of the above branch road. These properties occupy a narrow tract of level country with a general trend from north-west to south-east. The tract averages about a mile in width and is bounded by low ranges of hills on the south-western and north-eastern sides. The drainage is effected by several small creeks flowing to the north-west.

The level tract of country is occupied by olivine basalt of Tertiary age which yields the red soil on the above properties. The basalt represents an old lava flow which filled a former valley.

The sides of the valley are occupied by the diabase (locally termed ironstone) of Mesozoic age.

The basalt and diabase are the only rocks which occur in the area examined. The occurrences shown to the writer as being oil shale consisted of completely decomposed basalt or diabase, probably the former, exposed in holes where trees had been blown down. This material consists almost wholly of clay and bears not the slightest resemblance to oil shale nor would it ignite and burn.

If there exists any oil shale in the areas it must be in localities which are unknown to the guide (Mr. Muckridge) with whom Mr. O'Byrne arranged to show the writer over the properties.

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