

UR 1953/23-24

13th January, 1953.

MEMORANDUMALLEGED OIL SEEPAGES NEAR STRAHAN

Mr. H. Fletcher, one time headmaster of the Strahan State School has for some time been making representations for a geologist to visit the Strahan District to examine what he considered to be oil seepages.

Two areas were investigated one near the sea coast north of the Henty River and the second on and about Ocean Beach near Strahan.

The area to the North is in the vicinity of Lake Harrison, a small lake or lagoon 2 miles north-west of Koyule Railway Siding. Surrounding the lake is swampy country covered with tea tree and button grass and to the west sand hills with low scrub. To the east revealed in railway cuttings are semi-consolidated Tertiary Deposits of clay, sand and pebbles containing one or more thin seams of lignite. There is no sign of oil seepages or what even may be mistaken for oil seepages in this area.

On Ocean Beach, three miles West of Strahan are damp patches and small puddles formed by water soaking through the sand hills. On the surface of some of these pools can be seen a scum, which Mr. Fletcher thought might be oil. This scum however is caused by the decay of small organisms and when examined carefully does not look like oil but breaks up into angular fragments. Inland from the beach is undulating swampy country with tea tree scrub. This same scum may be seen on water in these swamps.

Mr. Fletcher also mentioned a black area of water just off shore near the end of the road. This could not be identified on the day of my visit but may have been caused by one of two things; either of water swirling round the decayed vegetation which can be seen at places on the beach, or else the effect of fine grained ilmenite which also is washed up on to the beach.

The third point mentioned in favour of an oil occurrence was the finding of a piece of pitch like material on the beach. The washing up of this material is fairly common on the West Coast and pieces have been investigated from Port Davey in the South to King Island in the North so that the finding of a piece here has no local significance.

No evidence could be seen in this locality which suggested the occurrence of oil-bearing strata. The area is a low lying undulating coastal plain underlain by unconsolidated or semi-consolidated Tertiary sands, clays and gravels and mainly covered

2.

by recent sands. Thus not only can no structure be determined but not even an outcrop is visible.

(SGD)

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GEOLOGIST.

The Director of Mines,
HOBART