

MEMORANDUM:URANIUM IN TASMANIA

Last week I escorted Mr. B. Walpole of the Mineral Resources Bureau and representing the Atomic Energy Commission, to the Avoca District where uranium minerals had been reported. We visited three main areas as follows:-

ROYAL GEORGE AREA:-

It was here on the 11th January, last, that Mr. W. Pitulej discovered the first authentic uranium mineral reported in Tasmania; torbernite. This area will be the subject of a separate report by me. Sufficient to say that although the mineral is a secondary one and no actual ore was seen, there is sufficient torbernite present over a fairly large area to warrant further investigation and for Mr. Walpole to recommend the payment of an interim reward.

Mr. Walpole had with him a Harwell Ratemeter which indicates Beta as well as Gamma rays and can be used as an approximate assay instrument in the field. The best results obtained over an area were about 0.15% uranium oxide.

LEONA AREA:-

This is situated about 4 miles, north-east of Avoca, just north of the South Esk River. Mr. F. Milne and party had reported the occurrence of uranium minerals in this area. However, an examination revealed no trace of these and a count of about three times background was obtained in a fairly normal, coarse grained granite and no sign of increase with the Beta probe. This grade of count is not uncommon in massive granitic rocks.

MT. REX MINE:-

Reports of radio-active materials at this Mine have been received from several prospectors. We were accompanied on the visit by Mr. D. Parker of Fingal, who has pegged the area. Mt. Rex is about 6 miles north of Avoca and can be reached by car. Although primarily a tin prospect, good specimens of galena, blende and chalcopyrite can be seen on the dumps.

The country rock is granite and in the open-cut the rock has been altered by intense silicification and is marked by the presence of fluorite and lead and copper minerals. Here a count of up to five times background was obtained but no increase in the Beta count. The material from the main shaft dumps also showed a count of several times background. No uranium minerals could be identified here.

Granite outcrops near Storeys Creek on the outskirts of Rossarden were tried with the count but no appreciable increase was noted.

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Forwarded through the Chief Geologist