

MOLYBDENITE AT MT STRONACH

Interest has lately been renewed on the molybdenite deposits of the Scottsdale District. Mr. B.A. Farquhar, a Scottsdale business man, has drawn attention to the fact that farmers find difficulty in obtaining molybdenite in their super phosphate supplies. He has investigated former molybdenite prospecting operations in the vicinity of Mt Stronach and requested Departmental advice.

Mt Stronach is situated about three miles south east of Scottsdale, close to the Tasman Highway and the north eastern railway line. This area was prospected superficially for molybdenite about forty five years ago and again about twenty five years ago, but, apart from two or three small outcrops in the massive granite outcrop on the western slope of the mountain, little can be seen.

These deposits have been fully described in a publication of the Geological Survey, Mineral Resources No. 1 Part 1 and need not be recapitulated here. It is sufficient to say that the molybdenite appears to be an original constituent of the normal biotite granite and to have crystallised contemporaneously with the quartz, feldspar and mica. It does not appear to occur, as more normally, in quartz veins, or in pipes, or in greisen contained in the normal granite. As seen in near outcrop the molybdenite appears as irregular splashes on the granite, rather as though painted on. In one prospect, Harvey's, the molybdenite does appear to be more concentrated and although little can now be seen, except on the dump, the form of the cut suggests that the mineral here has been concentrated along one zone. With no structural controls of ore deposition, it is difficult to suggest any pattern for prospecting. It should be remembered that the grade of a molybdenite ore always appears better than it is. The silvery, shiny, metallic looking sulphide stands out in a very distinctive fashion from the granite groundmass and although the density of molybdenite is fairly high (4.75) it is usually in thin plate-like concentrations.

The price of  $\text{MoS}_2$  in 1916 was about £500 sterling per ton. The price of 8/9 per ~~ton~~ on offer today is therefore in comparison not as attractive. It would appear that if the deposit were not worthy of further prospecting then, it is certainly not so now. Any mining operations carried on by open cut methods would involve careful hand picking.

It is useless to take a sample for assay from sporadic deposits of this nature. However, it has been suggested to Mr. Farquhar that he obtain a sample of half a ton of hand picked material and forward it to the Chief Chemist. Costs of the recovery and value of the product could thus be assessed and would furnish a guide to whether further prospecting should be recommended or not.

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