

Interim report on the Parklands landslide

by K. L. Burns

This interim report on the Parklands landslip has been issued to enable the Department to consider the matter, and because it is felt certain emergency procedures should be adopted immediately, pending completion of investigations.

The writer has spent one full day examining the slip, and in discussions with Council officers. It is felt Mr Gee is quite competent to proceed with additional investigations under general supervision. It is envisaged that investigation will proceed in two stages.

First Stage

It seems certain that a strong mass or gravity type retaining wall will need to be built for immediate stabilisation of the slope, and measures undertaken to divert stormwater from the slip.

In the former case, it may not normally be our province to provide minimum specifications for such a structure. However there is a jurisdictional problem, in that responsibility may rest with the PWD, Burnie Council, householders in the affected area, or possibly the Transport Commission. It is desirable that the feasibility of such a wall, and minimum specifications, be decided immediately while the slide is fresh and the appropriate measurements can be made. As the only Government authority officially involved at this stage, it is felt desirable to make at least a preliminary estimate, particularly in view of the possibility of further sliding adjacent to the present slip.

The essential measurements have already been made by Mr Gee, and it is expected that the data will be reduced by Friday.

In the case of stormwater drainage, while this is the direct responsibility of householders, it is felt that their efforts to date have been entirely inadequate. Although not mentioned in the formal report, satisfactory drainage for the six houses concerned will be obtained only if installed by the Council under supervision of their Engineer. An urgent necessity is a large, lined channel to carry water away from the present slip, preferably right off the embankment.

Second Stage

It is suspected that local stormwater is not the principal cause of the slip. A general rise of groundwater levels is likely. Diversion of stormwater in the immediate vicinity of the slip may therefore be ineffective in providing stabilisation on a long-term basis. For the second stage of investigation, it is recommended that Mr Gee prepare a general map of the subdivision, on the 40 foot to one inch contour maps which may be obtainable. The area involved is only about 400 yards square. With this map it will be possible to draw conclusions as to the general groundwater conditions in the subdivision, and outline drainage procedures which may be necessary. It seems possible that it may be necessary to install a short flume around the back slope of the hill to catch runoff, and drive an adit under the embankment at highway level to provide deep drainage.

If the base maps are available on Monday, mapping could be completed by Wednesday, after which the essential facts will be available for discussions at senior level.

In the meantime, interim recommendations are made as to precautionary measures which are necessary to prevent a worsening of the situation in the event of further heavy rains.

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