

PROPOSED EXTENSIONS - INSPECTION HEAD WHARF

The Marine Board of Launceston proposes to extend the existing wharf at Inspection Head and has sought advice concerning the stability of the area. The proposed extensions consist broadly of three phases which are discussed below:-

(1) Wharf Extensions:- This phase involves extending the present pier some 400 ft. in a northerly direction and about 200 ft. to the south. In addition to this it is proposed to dredge a small quantity of material at the southern end of the pier and a somewhat larger quantity from the eastern side of the existing channel. From a geological point of view little can be said regarding the probable behaviour of the recent sediment on the river bed as these have not been studied. However since no serious problems were encountered during the construction of the existing pier it seems reasonable to expect that similar conditions will be encountered during the proposed extensions

The main concern is that the proposed extensions may affect the stability of a major ancient landslip which appears to occupy most of the area between the Beauty Point and Inspection Head Wharves. The heel of this slip forms a narrow bench between the 80 and 100 ft. contours along the foot of the steep ridge behind these two wharves. The toe of this slip has not been identified positively but it lies below low water level and probably occurs along the western edge of the shipping channel. If this is so, the construction of wharf extensions will be confined to the toe of the slip. Thus any loading in this area should have a beneficial effect on the overall stability of the area.

For the same reason any dredging along the western side of the channel will tend to unload the toe of the slip and promote instability.

However the amount of dredging proposed on that side of the channel is very small and should be balanced by the additional loading imposed by the wharf. This phase of the proposal does not seem to present any special problems.

(2) Reclamation:- It is proposed to reclaim an area along the foreshore in the vicinity of Inspection Head Wharf to provide areas for parking and storage etc. The area involved lies close to the toes of small landslips developing between the highway and the shoreline. Reclamation in this area will tend to stabilize these landslips and should have a beneficial effect on the whole area.

(3) Excavation of filling material:- To carry out the proposed reclamation it is intended to excavate material from the corner of the highway a little north of Inspection Head. The road cutting there is in basalt which is underlain at road level by fairly firm Tertiary clays. About 20 feet above road level there is a distinct bench in the basalt knob and then a steep rise to the top of the hill. This may be due to a bed of softer material interbedded with the basalt or it may be an erosional feature. At the present time this hill is delicately balanced as evidenced by the incipient landslip developing beneath the basalt and causing a slight subsidence of the highway pavement near the junction of the highway and Oxford street.

It seems clear that some earth movement can be anticipated in this vicinity in the future. If the Marine Board carries out earthworks in this area they could possibly be held liable for damage caused by such movements. It is therefore recommended that the Board obtain the necessary filling elsewhere.

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