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UNDERGROUND WATER SUPPLY - KING ISLAND

Due to the lack of adequate surface streams, much of the water requirements for industry, stock and domestic purposes on King Island has to be drawn from underground sources by wells and bores. However, due to sand cover, not a lot of the solid geology of the Island is known. The Island is largely occupied by Precambrian to Cambrian rocks, fringed by Devonian Granite and covered by varying thicknesses of Recent sands and limestones and sparse thin beds of Tertiary Limestone.

Underground water is usually obtained in the Recent sands, where they occupy depressions in the granite roof of sufficient depth to accumulate water. Near the aerodrome a careful survey had to be made to find a basin of sufficient dimensions to supply by means of a bore the requirements of an abbatoir, 10,000 gallons a day. The town supply for Currie is drawn from underground water contained in Recent sands. Water cannot be obtained from granite, except along major fault zones and these are not normally apparent on the surface.

The majority of the Closer Settlement farms however have been developed on land underlain by the Precambrian rocks; slates, phyllites, siltstones and the like, which weather to a clay at the surface and are not normally covered by great depth of sand. These rocks are not in themselves aquifers, as they are mainly impervious, but they are normally sufficiently jointed and cracked to carry a little water in these apertures. Therefore, as was pointed out in my 1948 and 1951 reports, wells will be more efficient than bores and quite often bores will not yield sufficient water for normal stock and dairy requirements.

This Department has had no information since the 1951 report was written, when it was recommended that wells should be sunk or if this was impossible then bores to greater depths put down. It is understood that many of the bores yield insufficient water and that it has been less of late years. It is not known what proportion of wells were sunk and if the bores were put down to a reasonable depth, say 75 feet, below the water table.

If necessary this Department can make a further study of the underground water problems in the light of evidence gained from bores etc. since the last report was written.

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