

UNPUBLISHED REPORT 1963/17

Landslips at Beauty Point

by I. B. Jennings

For sometime a Department of Mines diamond drill has been engaged on drilling a small landslip in the vicinity of Beauty Point on behalf of the Public Works Department.

The slip is a small failure in Tertiary clay and sand extending from just above the West Tamar Highway down to the foreshore. The slip has caused a subsidence of some three feet of the highway over a distance of about 200 feet. The tension zone above the road is well defined and occurs immediately in front of an asbestos dwelling owned by F. G. White. So far no structural damage to this house has occurred. There is an equally well defined zone of heave around the toe of the slip along the foreshore. Damage caused by the slip so far is mainly confined to the highway pavement but in addition to this, water service and drainage have been disrupted and power and telephone cables disturbed.

The drilling indicates that the slip is a rotational shear failure of the clay beds along the top of a saturated bed of porous sand. Remedial action is being taken by the Public Works Department. No official request for geological advice has been received although discussions of mutual benefit have taken place between Departmental officers and engineers of the Public Works Department.

The remedial measures planned are anticipated to correct the present slip only. However in the past a further small slip to the north has also caused some subsidence of the highway pavement and the present indications are that this slip is still active but the movements are slight.

From a study of the area it is clear that the small slips are simply small unstable wedges along the front of an old major slide extending from south of Beauty Point to Inspection Head.

This infers that although remedial measures may be taken to correct these small landslides, the whole area traversed by the West Tamar Highway, between Beauty Point and Inspection Head, is inherently unstable. A recent press report indicated that the Launceston Marine Board contemplates expenditure of about £500,000 in additions to the Inspection Head Wharf. Since the main access route to this wharf is across the affected area it is considered that the above information should be brought to the attention of the PWD so that they may be aware of the problems involved.

It may also be considered advisable to inform other authorities concerned.

[3 April 1963]