

UNPUBLISHED REPORT 1965/19

Reported oil seepages at Mella

by W. L. Matthews

Mr A. H. Heathorn of Mella, near Smithton, has observed oil-like seepages on his property and requested a geologist's opinion.

The property is on the edge of Mowbray Swamp which is underlain by a thin cover of recent sand and clay, which in turn is underlain by dolomite of probable upper Precambrian age. Hills of Cambrian mudstone rise along the western margin of the swamp and it is from the sides of these hills that the seepages appear.

Water has collected in a number of places forming little pools of stagnant water, on the surface of which are films of an iridescent substance resembling oil films. When the films are disturbed they break up into irregularly shaped fragments, whereas an oil film forms long streaks of colored bands. The films are therefore considered to be of iron oxide which has often been mistaken for oil when it occurs in this form.

[13 September 1965]