

OIL IN TASMANIA.

(Extract taken from "Mercury", Tuesday, August 21st, 1923).

Bulletin No. 24 published this year by the Commonwealth Institute of Science and Industry on "The production of liquid fuels from oil-shale and coal in Australia" in dealing with the oil-shale deposits of Tasmania, says :- "Assuming a reserve in the field of 12,000,000 tons, and an average crude oil yield of 40 gallons per ton, the total recoverable oil will be about 480,000,000 gallons. This represents a six to seven years' supply for Australia, based on present consumption".

RECENT DISCOVERIES.

In making the above computation the author of the bulletin took for his basis the late Mr. W. H. Twelvetrees' estimate of the amount of oil-shale in reserve in Tasmania in 1912, or eleven years ago. It is a pity his figures were not brought more up-to-date, and Tasmania given credit for the extensive additions which discoveries of the last few years have made to our oil-shale reserves. The 12,000,000 ton estimate related to the Mersey Valley district alone, but this has lately been more than doubled by finds of shale in outlying parts of this area, while entirely new areas have also been discovered, which still further increase what may be termed the positive reserves, while the probable reserves may be looked upon as very much greater still, for the geological conditions are such that there is every likelihood of the shale deposits being found over a very much wider area than ^{has} at present been proved.

The Government Geologist, Mr. A. McIntosh Reid, who for some months past has been energetically engaged in the investigation of our oil resources, has made a number of important discoveries, which not only add to the extent of previously known fields, but give at least one new field of magnitude and richness to the State. His work has brought the positive reserves of oil-shale up to the fine aggregate of 42,000,000 tons, spread over what at present are five

separate fields. They are :-

	<u>TONS.</u>
Latrobe-Railton-Kimberley Area.....	30,000,000
Beulah Area.....	3,000,000
Quamby Bluff Area.....	3,000,000
Hook Area.....	800,000
Conah (recently discovered by Mr. Reid) area.....	6,000,000

The crude oil contents of the shale vary somewhat, but if averaged at 40 gallons per ton, which is really a very low figure, the recoverable oil is shown to be 1,680,000,000 gallons, or instead of a six or seven years' supply for the Commonwealth enough to last from 21 to 25 years. A recent experiment in distillation returned 68 gallons of oil to the ton of shale.

THE CONAH FIELD.

This, the newest of our oil-shale areas, was discovered by Mr. A. McIntosh Reid only about three months ago. Mr. Reid went out to investigate an occurrence of shale that was known to exist on the property of Mr. Wm. Cross in the valley of the Gam River, about two miles north of Conah. Examinations of the neighbourhood led to the discovery of another and much larger deposit, five miles to the S.W. of Cross's, on land charted in the names of E. Hodgetts, J. Martin, A.L. Green, Jas. McNab, H.E. Miles, and C.C. Jubb. This area is easily accessible from the Mount Hicks-road, which is only 1½ miles away. There is every probability of a very large extension of this area for the permo-carboniferous rocks, with which the oil-shale deposits are closely connected, extend southwards to the Helleyer River, and very likely further, westward through Takone to Preolenna, and eastward right into the "Emu Bay" block of the Van Diemen's Land Co's ground.

Unfortunately, through stress of other engagements,

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Mr. Reid was not able to spend more than 10 days on his investigations here, and it is proposed that he shall visit the district in the summer, and make complete investigation of the whole area. In the meantime the Mines Department, being strongly impressed with the value of the oil-shale deposits, Mr. Reid will be engaged upon the production of part 1 of "The Oil Shale Resources of Tasmania" dealing with the Latrobe-Bailton-Kimberley, The Nook, Beulah and Quamby Bluff areas, and what is known of other places. The results of further investigations will be recorded as part 2.