

5. RESULTS (Cont'd)

5.2 Echo Sounding

The bathymetric plan (Map 3) shows the seafloor to be almost perfectly horizontal, with an average gradient of only about 1 in 5000 towards the north-east. The variation in seabed levels across the 4 km x 4 km area is 77.0 to 78.4 m. below the mean tidal level during the survey. At the proposed drilling location the seafloor is 77.7 m. below datum.

5.3 Side-scan Sonar and Bottom Sampling

The sonar revealed an almost featureless seafloor of low acoustic reflectivity consistent with silty clayey sediments. The uniform conditions were interrupted only by elongated grooves in the seabed; these are interpreted to be caused by trawling or anchor-dragging. Other minor, isolated reflections on the records are probably small seabed depressions or low-relief bumps. None of the features on the records are considered to represent a potential hazard for rig emplacement.

The material recovered from the three drop cores (taken near the centre of the survey area) comprised basically clayey sediment. There is no sonar evidence of major facies changes in the other parts of the survey area. This sediment is quite dissimilar to the sand-grade material obtained by the grab sampling in the YOLLA-1 and KOORKAH-1 areas.