

008

PHYSICAL FEATURES(a) Physiography

The Launceston Tertiary Basin area, which is regionally classified as the Northern Midland Plains, is flat to gently undulating and varies in altitude from around 700 ft. in the Conara-Campbell Town area of 450 ft. about Longford. This is related to the South Esk River thalweg - being about 600 ft. in the area, five miles NE of Conara and 450 ft. downstream from Perth.

A discontinuous NW trending median "high" marked by the Hummocky Hills (summit 1574 ft.) and the Mt. Arnon Hills (summit 1035 ft.) divides the plains area. This represents a complex horst situation.

In the eastern part of the area, fault controlled tiers trending NW rise away to the Ben Lomond massif (5000 ft.) while from a line west of Campbell Town, Bracknell and Westbury, foothills rise back to the prominent Western Tiers. (4000 - 4500 ft.) rimming the Central Plateau (3000- 4000 ft.)

The principal permanent rivers are the South Esk, Macquarie, Lake and Meander, all of which show mature valley characteristics of anabranches, ox-bows and meandering courses on entering the plains (Appendix I).

The Plains are at present undergoing a slow degradation due to the drainage course of the South Esk being entrenched in resistant dolerite between Hadspen and Launceston.

The plains area drops away sharply north of Evandale, down to the Launceston area at the head of the Tamar Estuary. Incipient stream capture is threatened here by the Rose Rivulet on the South Esk River.

(b) Vegetation

The vast majority of the area is cleared of the native bush and given over to farming - predominantly grazing of sheep and cattle. This ranges from larger "run" type properties of varyingly improved pasture up to about 10,000 acres in the Conara-Campbell Town area to intensively cultivated properties of a few hundred acres in the Cressy-Bishopsbourne area, where growing of wheat, oats, barley, peas is also undertaken. Some dairying takes place in the higher rainfall area near Bracknell and Bishopsbourne.

Tracts of native forest remain in the Conara-Epping area and elsewhere. Principal trees are of eucalypt species including *Eucalyptus linearis*, *Eucalyptus pauciflora*, *Eucalyptus viminalis* and *Eucalyptus amygdalina*. The timbers from this rainfall belt are not of good milling quality but meet some local agricultural requirements. The better stands are suitable for chipping to be made into paper pulp. Various species of acacia, e.g. *Acacia dealbata* are fairly common.

(c) Climate

The overall climate of the area is temperate with most precipitation in the winter. Rainfalls vary from 26.64 inches at Launceston City (5 year mean), 27.56 inches at Launceston Airport (Western Junction), 24.83 at Longford and 21.84 at Campbell Town, the latter two showing the effect of the rain shadow created by the Western Tiers on the prevailing westerly air stream.