Received 26/10/12

GEOCHEMISTRY AND MINERAGRAPHY

OF THE NAIRNE PYRITE DEPOSIT,

BRUKUNGA, SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Honours Bachelor of Science degree in Geology at the University of Adelaide.

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ABSTRACT

A mineragraphic study of the mineralogy of tension gash veins at the Nairne Pyrite Deposit, has revealed the existance of boulangerite, stannite ullrannite, freibergite, pyrargyrite and cubanite. Larger amounts of pyrite, pyrrhotite, galena, arsenopyrite, sphalerite and chalcopyrite were also observed.

Sulphur, iron and trace element geochemistry of the deposit has been studied in relation to the ore beds, waste beds and enclosing meta-shales. A statistical interpretation of the geochemical data was made using correlation coefficients and cluster analyses. Elemental ratios (Co/Ni, Cu/Zn, S/Se) were calculated. The results of carbon analyses add weight to the proposed theory of a sedimentary origin for the Nairne Pyrite Deposit.

The Nairne Pyrite Deposit at Brukunga situated 29 miles east of Adelaide, South Australia, has been shown to be an example of a sedimentary iron sulphide deposit by Skinner (1958), IaGanza (1959a) and George (1967). Jensen and Whittles (1969) have proposed a bacteriogenic origin for the sulphur on the basis of sulphur isotope studies. Edwards and Carlos (1954) using S/Se ratios have called the Nairne Pyrite Deposit hydrothermal, but the majority of the field and laboratory evidence indicates a sedimentary origin.

LaGanza (1959a) has reported the occurrence of rare sulphide minerals and sulpho-salts as well as the major sulphide minerals, pyrite and pyrrhotite. The first aim of this study was to check the mineralogy using the modern reflectance, hardness, X-ray and electron microprobe techniques along with the qualitative methods used by LaGanza.

The second part of the project was to undertake a detailed geochemical study across the ore and waste beds at the quarries of Nairne Pyrites Limited to study any trends associated with a sedimentary iron sulphide deposit.

GENERAL GEOLOGY

The Nairne Pyrite Member which has been traced for 65 miles along strike is found at the base of the Brukunga Formation. The Brukunga Formation of Cambrian age belongs to the Kanmantoo Group (Fig. la - in back pocket). The regional structure is controlled by a major N-S trending syncline plunging 30°S. Several large shear zones are present in the area of outcropping Nairne Pyrite beds (Mirams 1965).

At the quarries of Nairne Pyrites Limited, Brukunga, the Nairne Pyrite Member is divided into ore beds 1, 2 and 3 separated by waste beds A and B depending on sulphur contents (Fig. 1). At Shephard's

Hill the beds dip 70°E. This dip decreases further to the north and at Grass Fire Hill the beds dip 45 - 50°E. The mineralogy of the sequence has been formed under conditions of amphibolite facies metamorphism (George 1967, 1969b). The Nairne Pyrite Member consists of a dark grey fine grained meta-shales with some interbedded metasiltsones and dolomites. The sulphides are found as disseminations, in thin layers parallel to the bedding or in veins formed during metamorphism. Below the No. 3 ore bed the sulphur content decreases. In this lower part of the Nairne Pyrite Member a thin (25 feet thick) muscovite-quartz rich layer was observed at Little Hill before the underlying Inman Hill Formation was reached. The Inman Hill Formation is characterized by an increase in grain size, feldspar content and is a lighter colour than the Nairne Pyrite Member. The general rock type is a biotite rich meta-arkose which commonly shows cross-bedding. Above the Nairne Pyrite Member the rock type is also a coarser grained, lighter coloured biotite rich meta-arkose.

MINERAGRA 2HY

This mineragraphic study of the Nairne Pyrite Deposit is concerned with the mineralogy of the sulphide veins classified as tension gashes by George (1967, 1969b). LaGanza and Ramdohr (LaGanza 1959) have identified in tension gash veins the following sulphides and sulphosalts as listed in order of decreasing abundance.

Pyrrhotite FeS
Pyrite FeS2
Galena PbS
Sphalerite ZnS
Arsenopyrite FeAsS

Jamesonite Fb4FeSb5S14

Chalcopyrite CuFeS2

Tetrahedrite (Fahlerz) (Cu2Ag2)3Sb2S6

Bournonite CuPbSbS3
Pyrargyrite Ag3SbS3
Ulilmannite NiSbS
Breithauptite NiSb
Gudmundite FeSbS

Stibioluzonite Cu₃(Sb,As)S₄
Boulangerite Pb₅Sb₄S₁₁

In addition to the sulphides listed above, IaGanza (1959 a, b) has found marcasite, rutile, graphite and five different types of pyrite in unweathered samples of Nairne Pyrite. Recently Dr. J. Graham of the C.S.I.R.O. Perth (pers. comm.) has indicated the presence of minor amounts of monoclinic pyrrhotite, rare pyrophanite (MnTiO₃) and alabandite (MnS). The one small grain of alabandite observed was associated with a small grain of chalcopyrite.

This study to re-examine the rare sulphosalts reported by IaGanza was made on IaGanza's polished sections, especially those of vein minerals (sections 0A, 10A, 82A, 83A, 84A) and several freshly prepared polished sections of tension gash sulphides. Three different types of pyrite plus pyrrhotite, galena, sphalerite, chalcopyrite, arsenopyrite, boulangerite, stannite, ullmannite, freibergite, pyrargyrite and cubanite were identified. The other rare minerals reported by IaGanza (1969a) were not observed in the available sections of IaGanza's or in the polished sections prepared.

MINERALOGY OF THE TENSION GASH VEINS Pyrite FeS2

The pyrite in the veins was generally found as anhedral areas with an average diameter of 2.5 mm. This is in contrast to the primary pyrite found in the country rock which is sub-euhedral and smaller in size (.4 mm). Several of the larger pyrite areas were weakly anisotropic with a colour change from a pale orange to a bluishgreen. This may be caused by lattice distortions due to the pressure of impurities or during polishing (Uytenbogaardt and Burke 1971). Concentric pyrite was also observed in the tension gashes. Concentric layers of fine grained pyrite separated by thin layers of gangue formed oval shaped bodies up to .7 mm long. The concentric pyrite was a duller colour than the normal vein pyrite which was due to the fine grain size and associated gangue. Melnico.vite pyrite was found around the edges or as infillings of cracks through some areas of vein pyrite. The very small pyrite grains, mixed with gangue minerals often showed a colloform texture. Small areas of galena were situated in this type of pyrite. Anisotropism colours suggested the presence of marcasite along with the Melnicovite pyrite. This was confirmed by an X-ray powder photograph (Appendix 1).

Pyrrhotite FeS

LaGenza (1959) and George (1957) have reported that pyrrhotite

is the most common sulphide present in the tension gash veins. The pyrrhotite grains exhibit smooth irregular boundaries on contact with most of the other vein sulphidea and sulphosalts. In some sections the pyrrhotite appeared to be of two types, with the central part of an area of pyrrhotite having a pitted surface surrounded by pyrrhotite grains with a smooth surface. The central core pyrrhotite was only weakly anisotropic compared with the typical strong anisotropism shown by the outer grains of pyrrhotite. Reflectance and hardness measurements (Appendix 1) and an X-ray powder photograph confirmed that the central core was pyrrhotite.

At Nairne the majority of the pyrrhotite is hexagonal but minor amounts of monoclinic pyrrhotite was observed with the use of a magnetic colloid (Appendix 1) along grain boundaries and cracks in pyrrhotite masses. The core of pyrrhotite discussed above was hexagonal as was the majority of the surrounding pyrrhotite, therefore the observed effects may have been caused during polishing.

Galena PbS

Commonly the galena occurred as large areas (1 - 3 mm wide) and was easily identified by its colour, cleavage and triangular pits. Galena was also found as small vein-like bodies through pyrite, arsenopyrite and pyrrhotite. In this environment the galena cleavage was rarely observed and because of the colour of the major minerals it appeared greenish and its identification was based on hardness and reflectance measurements. Galena is the host mineral to the rare sulphosalts.

Arsenopyrite FeAss

Arsenopyrite was found as euhedral grains (.02 - .5 mm.) in a matrix of softer minerals (plate lc.) or as groups of grains with irregular grain shapes and boundaries with pyrite. In section 82A small arsenopyrite grains (.15 mm) exhibited some straight grain edges on one side with rounded hollows filled with the surrounding

PLATE I

a. Tension gash vein containing:

> galena (g) pyrrhotite (Po) stannite (st) boulangerite (b) freibergite (F) ullmannite (u)

Polished Section 8A. Magnification of 495X.

Inter-relationships between galena (g), freibergite (F), b. boulangerite (b) and stannite (st).

> Polished Section 10 A. Magnification of 750X. (In oil).

- A vein of sulphide minerals filling cracks in a large area of pyrite (py). The vein contains
 - chalcopyrite (op) galema (g) sphalerite (sp) stannite (St)

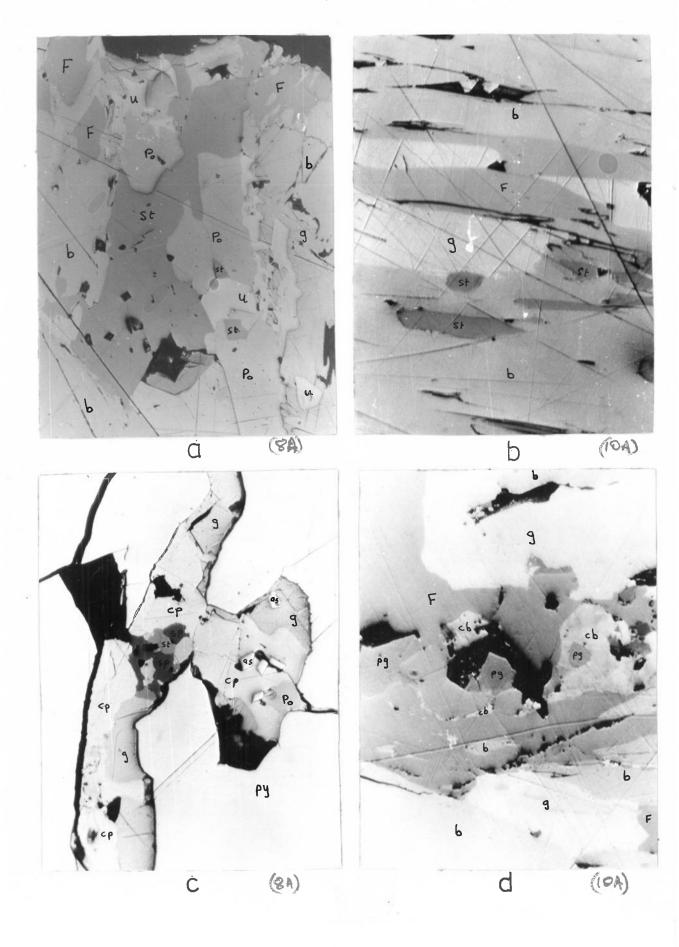
- arsenopyrite (as)

Polished Section 8A. Magnification of 750X (In oil)

d. The relationship of pyrargyrite (pg) and cubanite (cb) with freibergite (F), and galena (g) and boulangerite (b).

> Polished Section 10A Magnification of 1800X (In oil)

PLATE I



boulangerite on the other. This texture may have developed by growing arsenopyrite crystals in a softer matrix or by replacement of arsenopyrite by boulangerite. Most of the arsenopyrite showed typically strong anisotropism colours but some grains of similar colour, reflectance and hardness were only weakly anisotropic (blue-grey to yellowich green colour change). Spot electron microprobe analyses showed Fe, As, S to be the major elements present. An X-ray powder photograph also identified these grain as arsenopyrite. This implies that the grains were cut in a direction in which the arisotropic effects are weaker.

Sphalerite ZnS

Sphalerite occurs as dark grey, irregularly shaped areas (.2 mm.) associated with pyrrhotite ad galena. Dr. J. Graham (pers. comm.) had indicated that the sphalerite has high iron and manganese contents. The high iron content accounts for the dark grey colour of the sphalerite.

Chalcopyrite CuFeS2

Chalcopyrite was found as small blebs (.1 mm.) on the edges of pyrite, and pyrrhotite masses. Small areas of chalcopyrite were also found in veins cutting through the larger areas of pyrite and pyrrhotite (Plate lc.)

Boulangerite 5PbS. 2Sb2S3

LaGanza (1959a) has tentatively identified one grain of boulangerite in galena. He also has reported that jamesonite is the most common of the sulphosalts. This study has identified boulangerite as the major sulphosalt present, generally as elongate areas (.5 mm x .1 mm.) intergrown with galena and the other sulphosalts (Plate 1 a, b.) Boulangerite was distinctly bireflectant, grey to a light greengrey and was distinguished from galena mainly by its lack of cleavage and its strong anisotropism colours (dark green, brown with a green tint and a light brown-grey). The mineral had a reflectance range of 30.6 to 39.5% and an average Vickers Hardness Number with a 50 gm.

Load (VHN 50) of 145. Of these physical properties the VHN was more characteristic of boulangerite, than jamesonite and other Pb,Sb,S minerals (e.g. geocronite, robinsonite) whose other properties are very similar to those of boulangerite.

Three spot electron microprobe analyses, reported as nominal concentrations, averaged,

Pb	53,88
Sb	18.47
As	1.08
Cu	0.06
Fe	0.04
S	17.10
Total	90.63

The percentages were not corrected for mass absorption (Appendix 1) and hence the low total. An approximate mineral formula of Pb5Sb3S10 (c.f. Pb5Sb4S11 of boulangerite) was calculated from the above data. X-ray powder photographs also identified the mineral as boulangerite.

Stannite Cu2SnFeS4

Stannite was found associated with galena and boulangerite (Plate la, b). In several of the sections studied small areas of stannite (1 mm.) were situated at galena pyrrhotite boundaries. Stannite was identified from the following properties;

colour - olive grey (darker than boulangerite).

bireflectance - weak, observed under oil at grain boundaries.

anisotropism - strong, light violet to dark reddish brown.

reflectance - 26.9-29.3 percent.

VHN 50 - 220.

Qualitative electron microprobe analyses showed Cu, Fe, Sn and S to be the major elements present with rare Mn, Ag and Co.

Freibergite (Cu.Fe.Ag) 2 Sb4S13

The freibergite observed as small irregular shaped areas (less than 0.2 mm long), was associated with galena, boulangerite and stannite assemblanges (Plate la, b). This grey mineral with a greenish tint (darker than boulangerite) was weakly bireflectant and isotropic. Reflectance measurements ranged from 30.7 to 32.2 percent and an average VHN50 of 293 was obtained. These properties identified the mineral as tetrahedrite. The average values of three spot electron microprobe analyses, reported as nominal concentrations of elements are

Pb	0.11
Sb	21.17
Ag	22,31
As	1.22
Cu	7.93
Fe	6.19
S	18.48
Total	77.41

The low total suggests that one or more elements have not been analysed for. The general formula for tetrahedrite indicates the pressure of Zn which has not been reported in the above analysis. Another reason for a low total is that mass absorption corrections were not made on this analysis. The high weight percent of silver implies that the mineral is freibergite, a silver rich form of tetrahedrite.

Ullmannite NiSbS

The mineral later identified as ullmannite was observed as a white, with a pinkish tint, isotropic mineral. This mineral formed irregularly shaped areas less than O.1 x O.05 mm in sections con-

taining galena and other sulphosalts (Plate la). The reflectance range measured of 45.5 to 45.9 percent and the average VHN50 of 415 did not clearly identify the mineral. The average of five spot electron microprobe analyses used to identify the mineral as ullmannite is listed below as the nominal concentration of the elements. This analysis has not been corrected for mass absorption

Pb	0.11
Sb	49.47
As	2,56
Ni	17.06
Cu	0.06
Fe	0.09
ន	12.17
Total	81.52

Pyrargyrite 3AgoS. SboS3

A rare bluish grey mineral (.07 mm) was located in sections containing sulphosalts and galena (Plate 1d). This mineral was weakly bireflectant, strongly anisotropic (light to dark brown-grey) and showed strong red internal reflections. This soft mineral (VHN50: 99.2) had a reflectance of 27.1 to 29.0 percent. These properties were unable to distinguish between pyrargyrite and proustite and so an electron microprobe analysis was done. The following analysis corrected for mass absorption is the average of six spot analyses.

Sb	25.01	wt.	percent.
Ag	59,49	wt.	percent.
As	0.28	wt.	percent.
ន	17.32	wt.	percent.
Total	102.1	wt.	percent.

When these results were converted to atom percent, a mineral formula

Sb4Ag11S11 was obtained. This implied that the mineral was pyrargyrite.

Cubanite CuFe2S3

A fine grained (.01 mm), strongly bireflectant (yellow to brown) mineral was associated with pyrargyrite (Plate 1d). This mineral was strongly anisotropic showing a colour change from blue to brown. The reflectance varied from 36.1% when the mineral was brown to 38.2% when it was in the yellow bireflectance position. The grain size was too small for hardness measurements to be taken. As an average of three spot analyses corrected for mass absorption, the electron microprobe identified the following elements:

1.23 wt. percent. Sb 2.48 wt. percent. Αg As 0.22 wt. percent. 20.88 wt. percent. Cu 0.09 wt. percent. Co 37.04 wt. percent. Fe S 33.47 wt. percent. 95.40 wt. percent. Total

This analysis gives an approximate mineral formula of CuFe₂S₃, which is cubanite. The low reflectance range measured, compared with the range given by Uytenbogaardt and Burke (1971) of 39.2 to 40.4 percent, may be due to the fine grain size and/or polish of the cubanite.

CONCLUSIONS

The sulphide minerals of tension gash veins identified in this study agreed with those reported by IaGanza (1959a) but several differences were found in the mineralogy of the sulphosalts.

- 1. The major sulphosalt reported as jamesonite by LaGanza was identified as boulangerite. The presence of jamesonite can not be discounted because of the small number of grains analysed by the electron microprobe and identified from X-ray powder photographs.
- 2. The properties as described by LaGanza (1959a) of boulangerite are the properties of the mineral identified as stannite.
- 3. IaGanza predicted a high silver content of the tetrahedrite from its greenish colour. This was confirmed by the electron microprobe analysis which indicated a silver content high enough for the mineral to be called freibergite.
- 4. The presence of ullmannite and pyrargyrite was confirmed.
- 5. The yellow mineral associated with pyrargyrite thought to be stibioluzonite by IaGanza and Ramdohr (IaGanza 1959a) was identified as cubanite.

GEOCHEMISTRY

SAMPLE LOCATION

Samples were collected two diamond drill holes, DD9 and DD10 cutting across the ore and waste beds of the Nairne Pyrite Deposit. The position of DD9 and DD10 is shown in figure 1. The drill holes sampled were selected on the condition and availability of the core. Six inch samples were taken at ten foot intervals from DD9. To ensure sufficient coverage of the ore and waste beds, forty four samples were taken. DD10 was sampled in more detail to show any geochemical variations within an ore bed. Twenty five, six inch core samples were collected at five foot intervals from Wastebody A, across Crebody 2, to Wastebody B.

ELEMENTS ANALYSED

For both DD9 and DD10 sulphur, selenium, arsenic, iron, nickel, copper, cobalt, lead, zinc, manganese, chromium and vanadium analyses were done on all the samples collected. Sulphur, selenium and arsenic were analysed by X-ray fluorescence (X.R.F.) methods (Appendix II). Iron and the trace elements listed above were analysed for "total" metal content by atomic absorption methods. The "sulphide" Fe, Ni, Co, Cu, Fb, Zr and Mn contents were also analysed (Appendix II). Selected samples from DD9 were analysed for carbon using an induction furnace. (Appendix II).

PRESENTATION OF ANALYTICAL DATA

All of the data collected is listed in Appendix III. The spot sampling method used involved sampling errors, therefore rolling means were calculated to smooth out, and make the data more representative of the sections studied. The rolling means of the

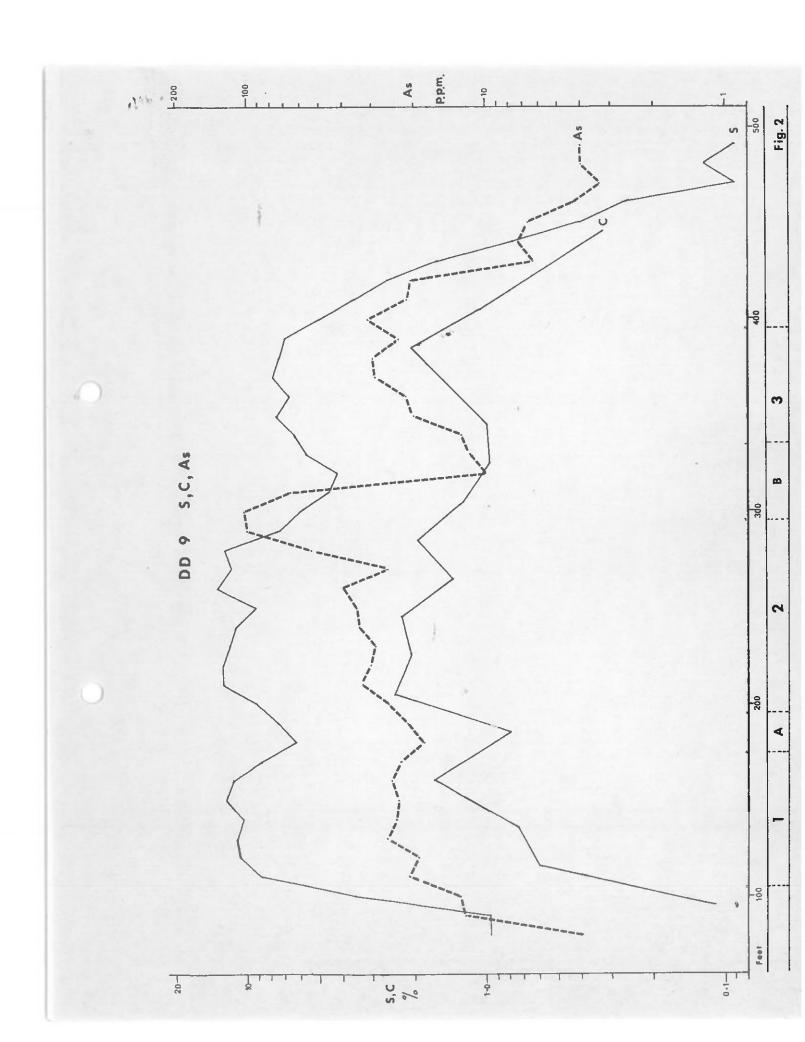
analytical data for DD9 and DD10 are plotted as profiles in figures 2 to 10. The rolling means were obtained by plotting the average of three adjacent assays in the position of the central sample. No values are plotted for the first and last sample of each drill core. The rolling mean representation of the data has some disadvantages. For one high metal value in the raw data, the rolling mean data indicates high values for three samples. The height of an anomaly is also reduced. When samples from both one and waste beds are averaged the contrast between them is reduced. The advantages of smoothing out of the data and making any trends present more obvious outwars the disadvantages.

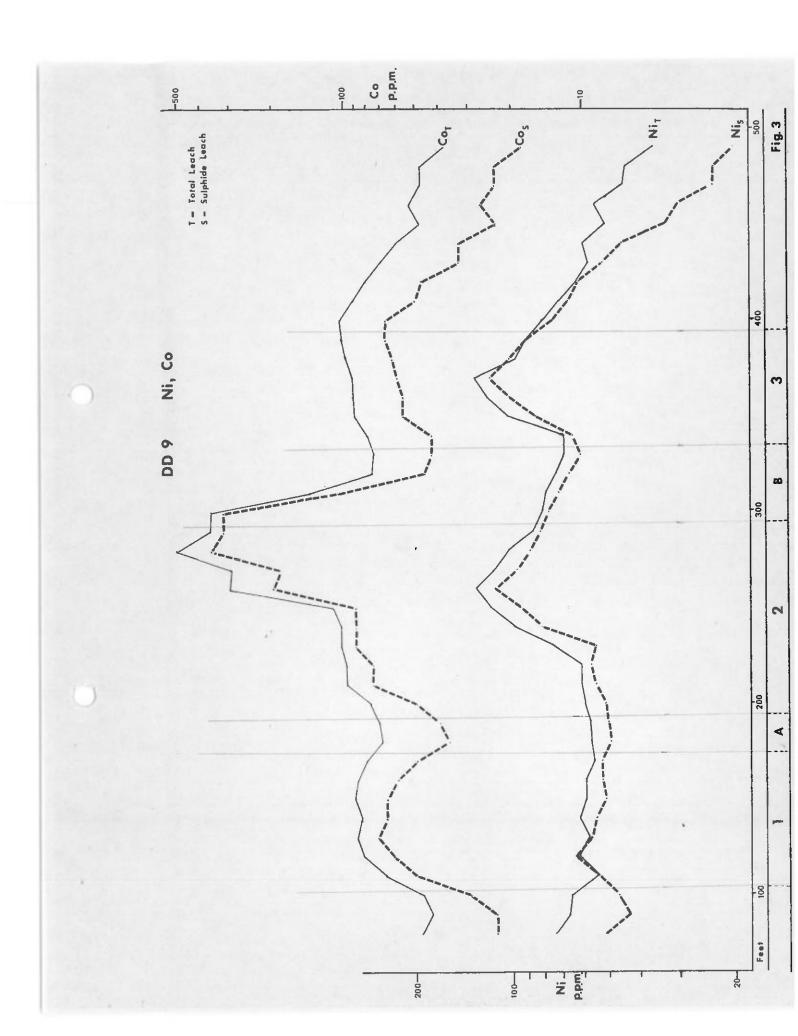
Two or three adjacent samples from DD9 were combined to give samples for carbon analyses. The raw data for carbon assays was plotted (fig. 2), because of this prior grouping of somples.

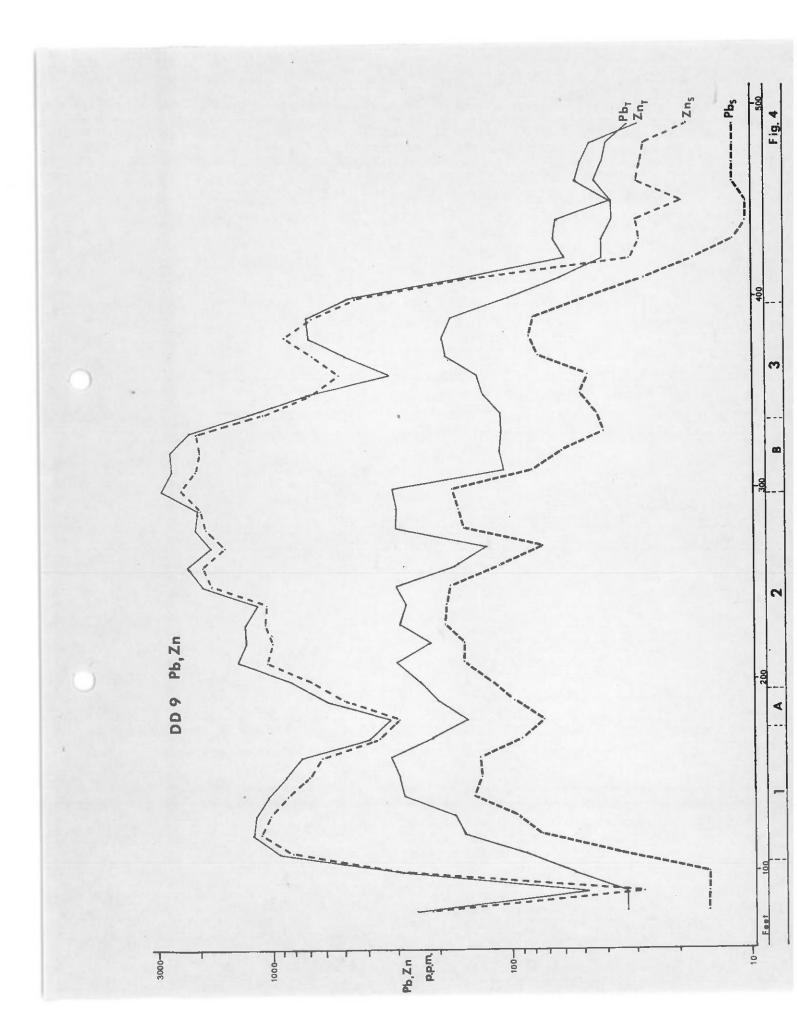
The position of ore beds 1, 2, and 3 and waste beds A and B as shown on the profiles were taken from the South Australian Department of Mines, Mining Review, No. 96 (p. 100, 101). This was confirmed by the sulphur assays done by X.R.F.

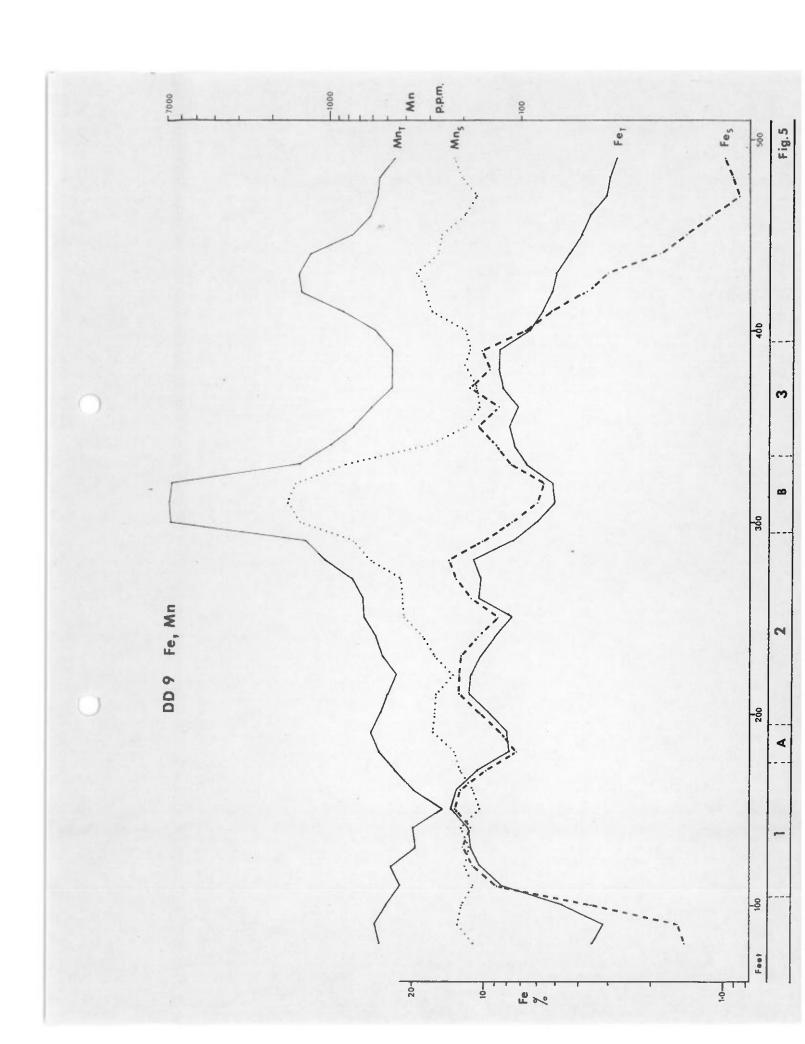
SULPHUR ANALYSES

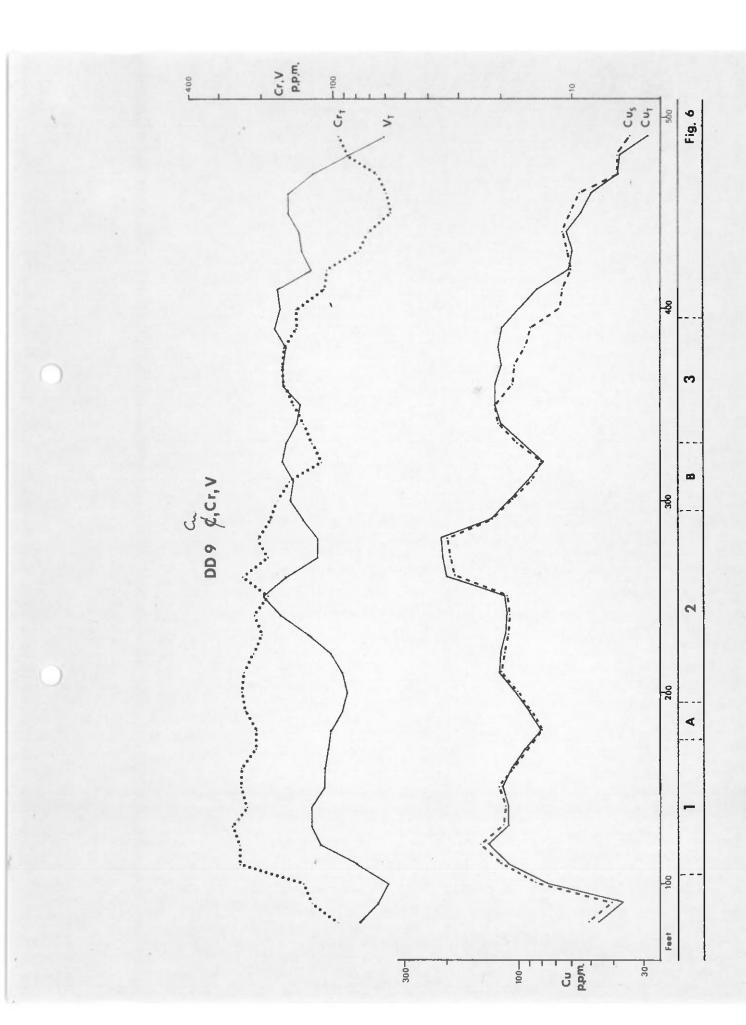
The results of the sulphur analyses of DD9 are shown in fig. 2. The sulphur content defines the ore and waste beds. Ore beds 1 and 2 have an average sulphur content of 11%, waste beds A and B contain 5% sulphur and ore bed 3 has an average of 7.5% sulphur. Below ore bed No. 3 the meta-shales contain approximately 1000 p.p.m. sulphur. The variation in sulphur content across ore bed No. 2 is shown in Fig. 7. The profile indicates a thin (15 ft.) barren bed towards the base of the ore bed. This drop in sulphur may be due to sampling but because three samples show this anomaly it was probably due to changing conditions of deposition. The sulphur content of sample 69 rises to 9.42%. This suggests that it is in ore bed No. 3 but the Mines Department assays indicate that this sample is still in wastebed B. Therefore the rise in

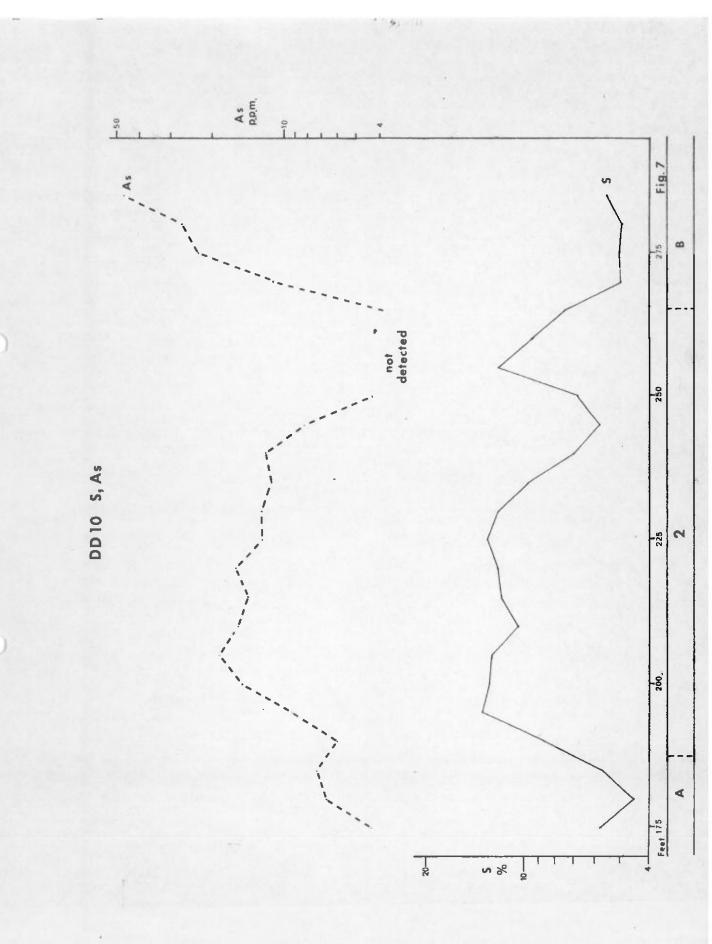


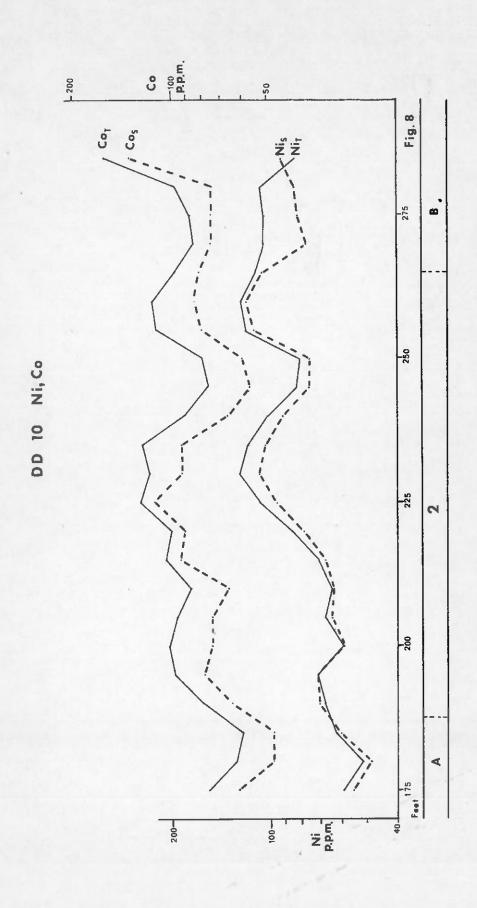


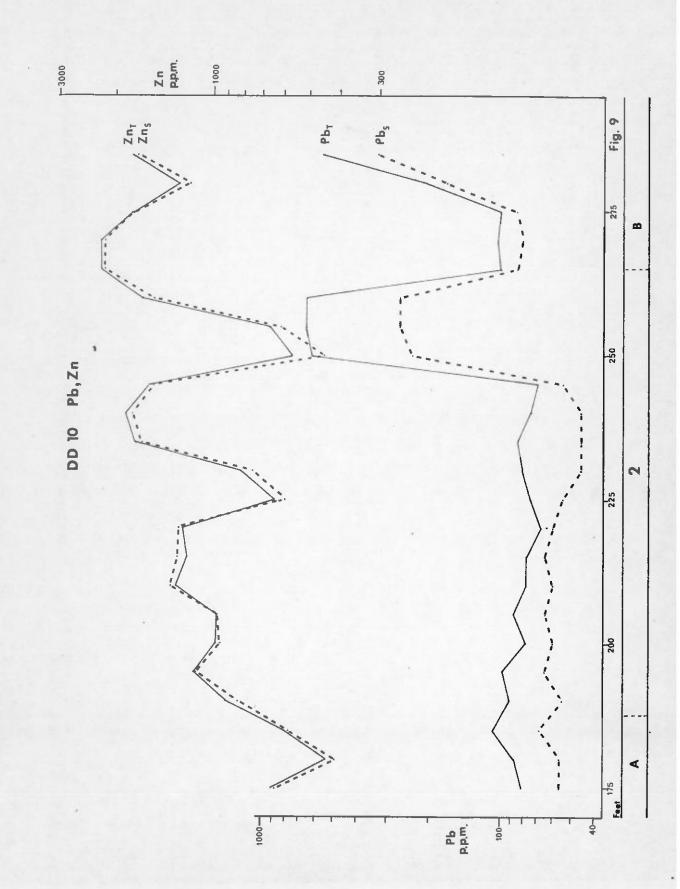


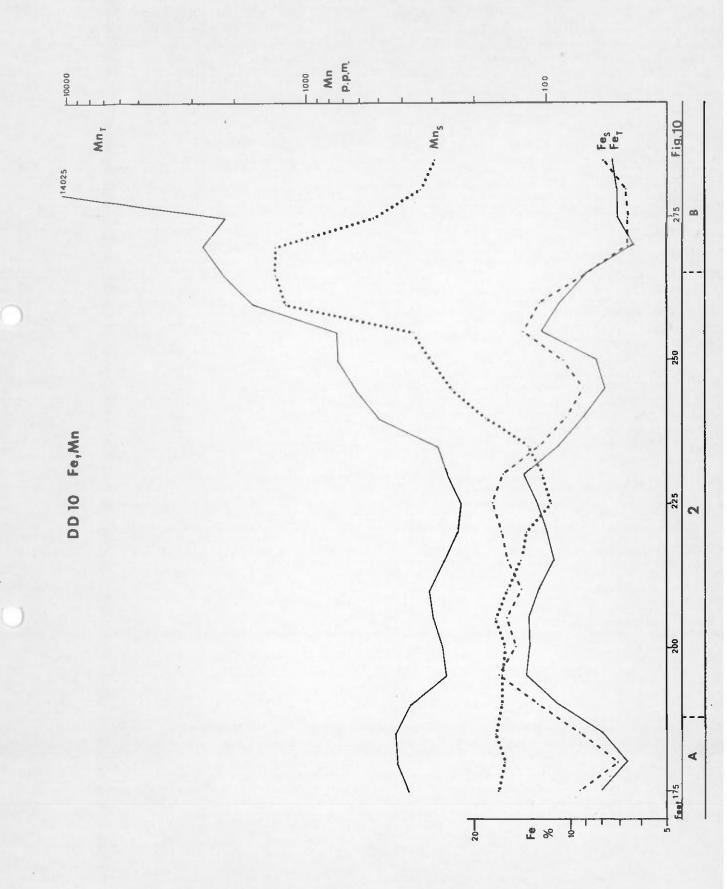


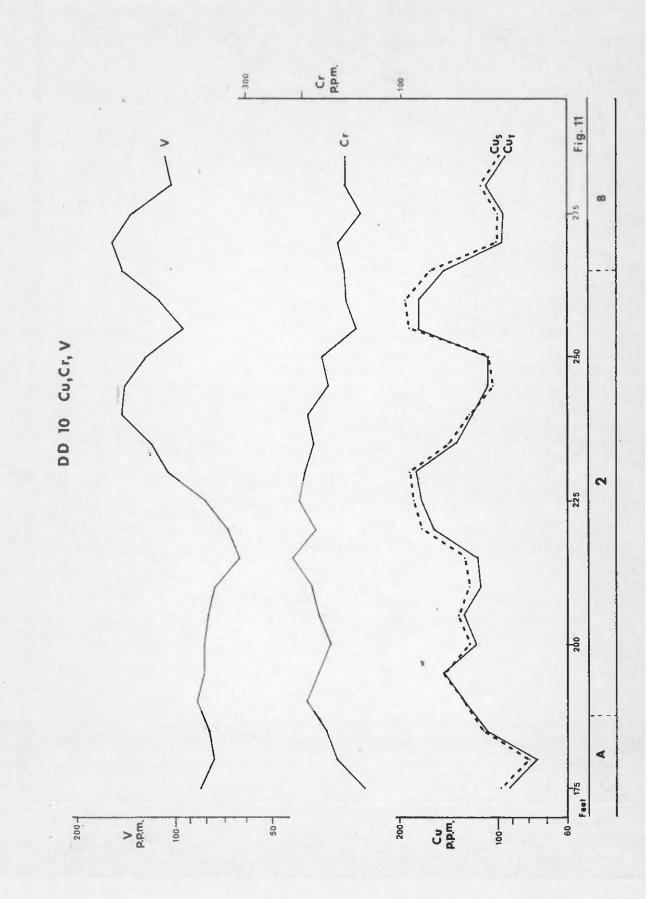












sulphur content is due to sampling.

TRACE ELEMENT ANALYSES

Arsenic

The arsenic analyses show a minor negative anomaly over waste bed A (fig. 2). A large positive anomaly exists over part of waste bed B. The cause of this anomaly was not observed in a polished block of the sample but 0.1% arsenopyrite would account for such an anomaly. The random variation of the profiles (figs. 2, 7) can be explained by the movement and concentration of As in veins during metamorphism. The As is found in arsenopyrite and in the rare sulphosalts of tension gash veins. The As content rises sharply from the unmineralized beds to the ore and waste beds.

Carbon

The carbon content of the sequence shows the same trends as sulphur (fig. 2). The broader anomaly over waste bed B may be due to the small number of samples analysed. The carbon content of the ore beds varied from 1 - 2.4% which dropped to .7 to .9% in the waste beds. The carbon is in the form of graphite (IaGanza 1959, George (1967).

Nickel

Most of the Ni is in the sulphide phase. This was confirmed by correlation coefficients (r) of .88 between total Ni and sulphide Ni, and .42 between total Ni and S. (Correlation coefficients greater than .30 are significant at the 99% level for 69 samples (Fisher 1948)). High total and sulphide Ni values (100-200 p.p.m.) indicate the position of ore beds 2 and 3. The No. 1 ore bed is not indicated by Ni values (Fig. 3). For DD10 the Ni values generally increase towards the base of ore bed 2 (Fig. 8). The low Ni values at 245-250 ft. in DD10 can be correlated with a decrease in S.

The range of Ni values (33-180 p.p.m.) obtained lies within the range for black shales (20-300 p.p.m.), reported by Hawkes and Webb (1962). This indicates that sedimentary processes can account for the Ni content of the sulphides.

Cobalt

The cobalt values rise sharply when ore bed 1 is approached (Fig. 3). Ore beds 1 and 3 are characterized by broad plateaus of Co values (80-160 p.p.m.). The position of waste beds A and B is shown by a drop in the total and sulphide Co values. No. 2 ore bed is characterized by a large increase in Co content (100-700 p.p.m.). Below the pyritic beds the Co content tails off to 40 p.p.m. For DD10 (Fig. 8) the Co values are not as high as for DD9. Cobalt is also depleted at 245-250 ft. in DD10. The cobalt is present in the sulphide phase. The sulphide Co profiles show the same trends as does total Co (r = .97).

Lead

Lead is found in galena and in the rare sulphosalts particularly boulangerite. (r = .85 for sulphide and total Pb). These minerals are found in tension gash veins which George (1967) has shown to be formed by the mobilization of elements during metamorphism. This concentration of Pb in veins accounts for the variability of the data (Fig. 4. 7). The Pb content rises from 30 p.p.m. in the hanging wall and footwall rocks to 100-725 p.p.m. in the ore beds. Generally, the Pb assays of the ore beds are lower than the Pb contents reported by Mirams (1965). Precipitation of PbCl2 out of the solutions used for A.A.S. analyses may be the cause of the lower Pb values. The high silicate Pb content (total Pb - sulphide Pb) of sample 62 (DD10, 255 ft.) may be the result of a sampling error. The .1 gm sample used for sulphide metal analyses has a greater sampling error than the larger sample analysed for total Pb content. The Pb profile for DD9 (Fig. 4) shows the position of the ore and waste beds but this is masked by variations within the ore beds. The top of ore bed 2 in DD10 is not distinguished

from waste bed A by the Pb assays.

Zinc

Correlation coefficients imply that Zn is present as a sulphide (r = .98 between total and sulphide Zn). Sphalerite has been observed in polished sections of the Nairne Pyrite. In section DD9 (Fig. 4) the position of waste bed A is shown by low Zn values compared with the Zn content of the ore beds. The average Zn content of waste bed B was higher than the Zn content of the ore beds. Mirams (1965) indicates a high Zn value for waste bed B (2,600 p.p.m.) but this is lower than the amount of Zn he found in the ore beds. In section DD10 (Fig. 9) the Zn content of waste bed B is also high (2,000 p.p.m.). These assays suggest that sphalerite has been concentrated in waste bed B. The profiles generally show a trend of increasing Zn content from waste bed A to waste bed B. The high Zn content of sample 1 (620 p.p.m.) is not anomalous for a black shale. No sphalerite was observed in a polished block of the sample but a small amount of sphalerite (.1%) in the crushed sample would account for this high In value.

Fron

Correlation coefficients of .93 between the total and sulphide Fe and .92 between total Fe and S indicate that the majority of the Fe is in the sulphide phase as pyrite and pyrrhotite. The sulphide Fe contents obtained for the cre and waste beds were generally 2% higher than the total Fe values. This was thought to be a suppression effect in the total leach method. Several samples were analysed in solutions made up with 1MHNO3 instead of water. This method improved the solubility of Fe by amounts up to .5% but these values were still below those obtained from the sulphide leach. This difference is too large to be accounted for by experimental error (Appendix II). Another possible explanation of this effect is an enhancement of Fe values by the H₂O₂ — ascorbic acid mixture. The results indicate that for high Fe contents the method is not completely satisfactory.

The iron profiles for DD9 and DD10 show the same trends as S.

For Fe the contrast between ore and waste beds is less. George (1967) has shown that all the Fe occurs as pyrite and pyrrhotite in the ore beds but in the waste beds some Fe was found in the silicates. This was based on petrology which revealed the presence of an Fe rich biotite in the waste beds which was replaced by phlogopite in the ore beds.

Outside the sulphur rich beds the sulphide Fe falls off sharply compared with the decrease in total Fe content. This indicates that the Fe is contained in the silicates. Whole rock analyses have shown the silicates beneath the No. 3 ore bed to contain 3% FeO (George, 1967).

Drews meabilly of sulphate leach does it exhaut any alterate FR? Different
between Fe total and autificate anticle
"one zone" in envolved Plant the
cincilarly of Place in the most hads
in meaningful.

In section DD10 a barren lens towards the base of the No. 2 ore bed (240-250 ft.) is shown by the total and sulphide Fe contents.

Manganese

Both total and sulphide Mn values are high in waste beds A and B (Fig. 5). High Mn contents were also found below the No. 3 ore bed (430-450 ft.). Small Mn depleted zones are found in ore beds 1 and 3. The Mn content of the unmineralized units above and below the ore beds is higher than the Mn content of the ore beds. highest Mn value (1750 p.p.m.) was located in waste bed B. high Mn values of waste bed B can be correlated with high Zn values. The high Mn values of samples from DD10 are also found in waste bed B (fig. 10). The sample at 265 feet can be correlated with high In values. The sulphide Mn profile shows the same trends as the total Mn. The correlation coefficient between total and sulphide Mn (.26) indicates that sulphide minerals do not contain all the Mn present. The sulphide Mn may be contained in sphalerite. Skinner (1961) has reported that two samples of sphalerite from the Nairne Pyrite Deposit contained 2.3 and 2.5 weight percent Mn. account for the highest Mn values obtained in sphalerite, 100% sphalerite would be required. This implies that large amounts of Mn are present in other sulphide and silicate minerals. Only a minor amount of the 3.75% Mm in sample 68 (DD10, 285 ft.) is present in sulphide minerals (180 p.p.m.). No phyrophanite or other Mn minerals were observed in a polished block of sample 68. The high total Mn value is due to sampling and/or experimental errors.

Copper

Copper shows a broad anomaly over the mineralized sequence (Fig. 6). Depletions of approximately 30 p.p.m. Cu indicates the position of the waste beds. The highest Cu value obtained (380 p.p.m.) was an analysis of a sample (21) containing a large crosscutting vein. The Cu was concentrated in veins during metamorphism.

In figure 11 the sulphide Cu profile is above the total Cu profile but the variation of these values is within experimental error, thus indicating that all of the Cu is present as sulphide minerals. Chalcopyrite and cubanite have been observed in polished sections. Secondary bornite was observed in sample 20 (DD9, 270 ft.). Section DD10 shows an increase in Cu towards the base of the No. 2 ore bed except for a depleted zone at 240-250 ft. Waste bed B is defined by a depletion of Cu.

Chromium

Chromium content does not distinguish clearly between the ore and waste beds of the deposit. The Cr values show a broad plateau over the pyritic sequence with the Cr content decreasing towards the base (Fig. 6.). A small depleted zone signifies waste bed B. The more detailed study of DD10 (Fig. 11) shows an increase in Cr content for ore bed 2. The Cr values (Appendix III) are not total Cr because the perchloric acid does not completely extract Cr. Contamination from the chrome-steel crushing vessel is assumed uniform for all samples. Chromium was not detected using a sulphide leach. No chromite has been observed at the Nairne Pyrite Deposit and so the Cr is probably present in chlorite and clay minerals.

Vanadium

The vanadium assays showed a general increase from approximately 60 p.p.m. in the unmineralized beds to 100-200 p.p.m. in the ore and waste beds. The V content of ore bed 1 and waste bed A is lower than the other units. Anderson (1969) has suggested that the V is contained in the sulphides (pyrite) of sedimentary deposits. Vanadium was not detected in the sulphide phase because of the low concentration in solution and poor sensitivity of the method.

Selenium

The Se analyses showed no trends distinguishing are beds from the waste beds. The samples that contained Se greater than

the detection limit of 3 p.p.m. were taken from ore beds 2, 3 and waste bed B. The highest Se value obtained was 9.5 p.p.m. in sample no. 23 (DD9, 290 ft.). These Se values are not reliable because of the variation in background slopes.

" Need Luglai 123

DISCUSSION

Loftus-Hills and Solomon (1967) have proposed that sedimentary pyrite can be indicated by Co/Ni ratios less than unity. The total metal analyses of the ore and waste beds of the Nairne Pyrite Deposit generally gave Co/Ni ratios greater than 1.

The average Co/Ni ratio based on the sulphide metal content, was 1.13 with a range from .36 to 9.33. The sulphide Co/Ni ratios for samples in ore beds 1 and 2 are generally greater than 1, while the ratios of samples from ore bed No. 3, waste beds A and B and the samples above and below these units are less than 1. A number of samples with pyrite as the major sulphide present had sulphide Co/Ni ratios less than unity.

This was shown by samples 12, 30 and 31 with sulphide Co/Ni ratios of .55, .54 and .48 respectively. Samples 30 and 31 also had total Co/Ni ratios in this range. Other pyrite rich samples had ratios greater than 1, e.g. sample 10 had a sulphide Co/Ni ratio of 1,20. These results show that without mineral separations, no clear indication of a sedimentary origin is shown by Co/Ni ratios. The variation in the Co/Ni ratios may be due to the selective mobilization of the trace elements as a "dispersed phase" during metamorphism (George 1967).

For both the total and sulphide metal contents of each sample Cu/Zn ratios were calculated. The sulphide Cu/Zn ratios vary from 1.0 to 5.0 for the samples outside of the ore and waste bed sequence (except for sample 1). The mineralized beds generally have

ratios of .03 to .7 (sample 21 has a ratio of 1.25). The sulphide Cu/Zn ratios for waste bed A were slightly higher than the ratios for ore beds 1 and 2. The sulphide Cu/Zn ratios for waste bed B did not vary significantly from the ore bed ratios. Similar trends are shown by the total Cu/Zn ratios. These trends are opposite to those used by Hallberg (1972), as environmental indicators. Hallberg has reported that Cu/Zn ratios are higher in zones that have been chemically reduced.

The above discussion revealed that the Cu/Zn ratios are the lowest in the ore beds which were formed under strong reducing conditions. $2 > 2 \le 2$

For the samples containing 3 or more p.p.m. Se, S/Se ratios were calculated. The ratios ranged from 4118 to 35,771. The validity of the higher ratios is doubted because the Se values were close to the detection limit of the analytical method used. For the samples containing the highest Se contents the S/Se ratios are less than 20,000. Ratios in this range for pyrite were considered by Edwards and Carlos (1954) to indicate a hydrothermal origin of the deposit. IaGanza (1959a) states that Se is concentrated in the carbonaceous material. A high Se content of the graphite would account for the low S/Se ratios.

Correlation coefficients between the total elements and between the sulphide metals analysed were calculated. The coefficients, significant at the 99% confidence limit are underlined in Table I. The significant correlations indicate a corresponding increase in metal content in ore beds and a decrease in waste and unmineralized beds. The correlation coefficients cannot be used to say clearly in what mineral phases all of the true elements are found. Nickel correlates with Cu and Fe. This may suggest that Ni is present in chalcopyrite, pyrite and/or pyrrhotite. The only conclusions reflected in these coefficients is that Ni, Cu and Fe contents all

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TABLE 2.

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS

Number of samples = 698

Correlations significant at the 99 percent level are underlined.

A. Total elements.

B. Sulphide Metals (H2O2 digestion)

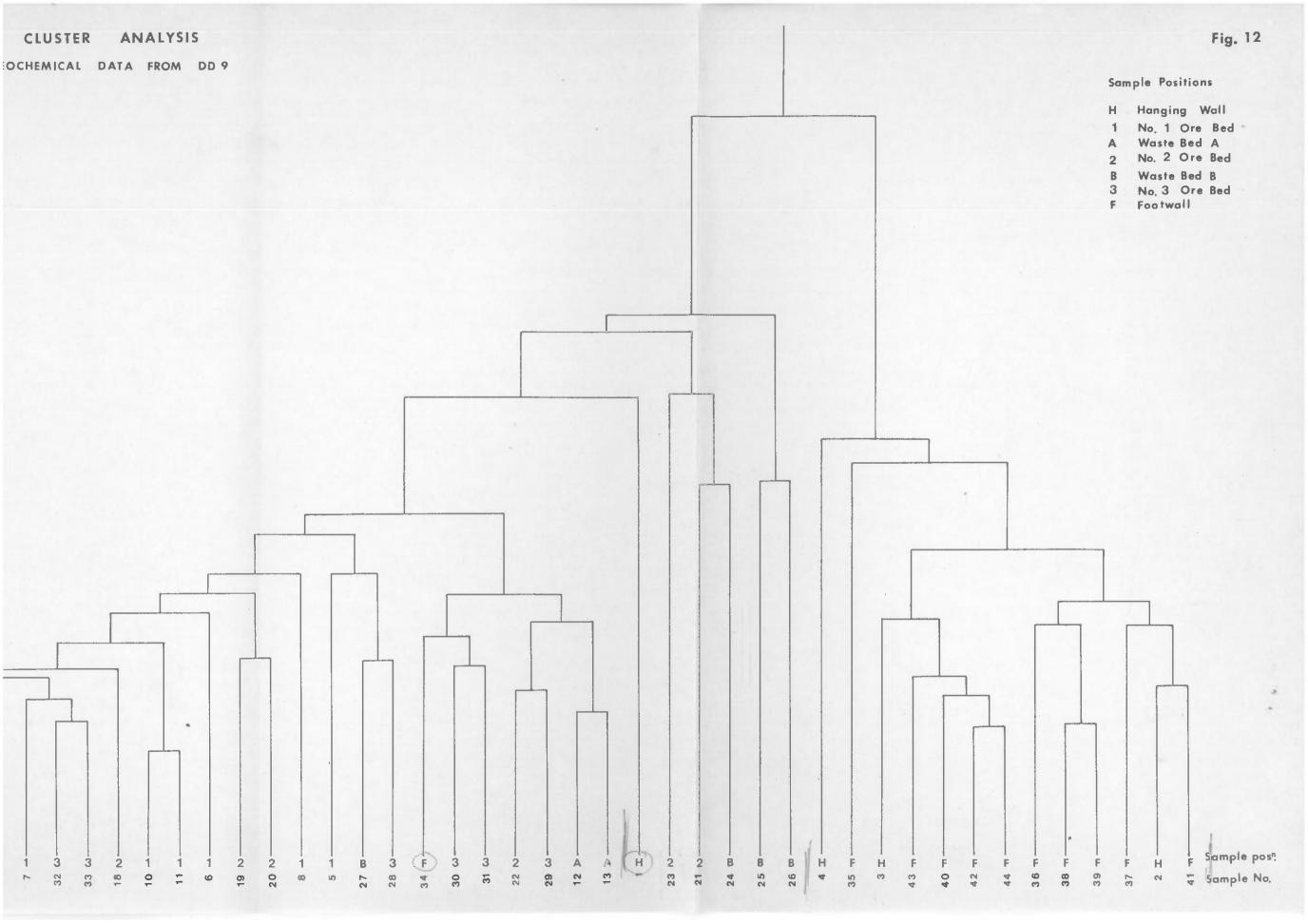
show similar geochemical trends across the sulphide beds. Similar conclusions can be obtained for Co. The significant correlation between sulphide Mn and Zn proves that the Mn of the sulphide phase is found in sphalerite. The poor correlation between total Mn and Zn implies that a large portion of the Mn is in silicate or oxide phases. The negative correlation between Mn and S (significant at the 85% level) also indicates that the majority of the Mn is not present in the sulphides but is tied up in the silicates or oxides which were not deposited when the S fugacity was high.

The significant correlation between carbon and sulphur (r = .75) supports the qualitative estimates of graphite content made by George (1967). George suggests that the relationship between the graphite and sulphide content of the beds reflects a correspondence between sulphide generation and organic decay. The sulphur has been derived from the biogenic reduction of sulphate ions (Jensen and Whittles (1969). Anaerobic conditions are required by the sulphate reducing bacteria. Love (1969) suggests that large quantities of organic matter is required for the growth of the organisms and the production of S. Therefore the correlation of high carbon content with high sulphur content agrees with the theory of a sedimentary origin for the Nairne Pyrite Deposit.

The dendogram obtained from a cluster analyses of the geochemical data collected from DD9 is shown in figure 12. The cluster analyses places all but two of the foot wall and hanging wall samples into a major group. The other major group contains samples from the ore and waste beds. Waste bed B is distinguished from waste bed A. Both waste beds are separated from the ore beds but no grouping is made of the individual ore beds.

The major separation of unmineralized from mineralized beds is significant when discussing the origin of the deposit. The geochemical profiles show a marked increase of Fe along with Cu,

Indicate This group



Co, Ni, Pb and Zn contents in the ore and waste beds compared with the unmineralized beds. A smaller increase is shown in the Cr and V values. This indicates an external source for the metal content of the sulphides. A large influx of Fe with the associated trace elements into a closed basin took place before sulphide deposition. The Mn content of the sediments was high before the sulphides were deposited. The waste beds are more closely related to the ore beds than to the barren footwall and hanging wall rocks.

During the deposition of the Nairne Pyrite Member periods in which the conditions were less reducing, accounts for the lower sulphide content of the waste beds and barren lenses in ore beds (DD10). This change of conditions is reflected by the carbon content of ore and waste beds. The metal content in the overlying water probably was the same during the formation of the cre and waste beds, with the amount of sulphide precipitated controlled by the amount of sulphur produced by the bacteriogenic reduction of sulphate. This is dependent on the reducing conditions and the amount of organic matter present in the basin of deposition.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would particularly like to thank Dr. R. A. Both for suggesting the project and for his supervision and help throughout the year.

Thanks is also extended to the following:

The S.A. Department of Mines for making drill core available for sampling.

G. Stolz, J. Sumartojo, D. Milton and members of the technical staff for help with experimental procedures.

Mr. J. Barry for assistance with the statistical interpretation of the data.

Mr. A. R. Milnes (C.S.I.R.O.) for electon microprobe analyses.

Mr. W. Rouse and Simpson Pope Limited (Finsbury) for use of equipment and assistance in analysing for carbon.

Mr. J. Hammer, Manager of Nairne Pyrites Limited, and Mr. L. Prendergast for information and surface plans.

The author would also like to thank fellow honours students for helpful discussion during the year.

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APPENDIX I

MINERAGRAPHIC TECHNIQUES

All the reflectance measurements were made using monochromatic light (wavelength = 546 n.m.) on a Vickers-Eel Microphotometer. The microphotometer was standardized with a tungsten carbide standard (reflectance = 43.9%).

A Vickers Microhardness tester was used to measure the hardness of the minerals, which was reported as a Vickers Hardness Number. The size of the load was selected depending on the hardness of the mineral so that an indentation with a diagonal length between 15 and 25 microns was obtained.

The magnetic colloid used to identify monoclinic pyrrhotite was prepared by Dr. J. Graham/using the general method of B. Gustard (1967) in which acetone was replaced by water and detergent as a suspension medium. The brown magnetic particles collected on the monoclinic pyrrhotite while the surface of the hexagonal pyrrhotite remained clear.

Microscopically unidentifiable mineral grains (greater than 1.5 mm in diameter) were drilled out of the polished section. This sample was then collected on a glass spindle coated with vaseline and mounted in an X-ray powder camera. The sample was then irradiated for a specific time (20 min to 6 hours) depending on the mineral. Minerals suspected of containing iron were irradiated with Fe K-alpha radiation (Mn filter). Other minerals were irradiated with Cu K-alpha radiation (Ni filter). The diffraction film was measured and d spacings calculated. The mineral was then identified by looking up the d spacing of the most intense lines in the

Inorganic Index to the Powder Diffraction File (1971) with final confirmation from the A.S.T.M. powder diffraction index.

The electron microprobe analyses (carried out at C.S.I.R.O. Division of Soils, Adelaide) of minerals containing Pb and As were not corrected for mass absorption. Pb had to be measured on a Malpha peak because of mutual interference of Pb and As Lalpha peaks. No correction factors were available for M radiation.

APPENDIX II

ANALYTICAL TECHNIQUES

SAMPLE PREPARATION

Approximately 70 gms. of the drill core sample (Kleeman 1967) was crushed with a small jaw crusher (ceramic jaw). This was then pulverized in a Siebtechnick Mill using a chrome steel vessel. Each sample was crushed for 3 minutes to achieve the required grain size of - 120 mesh for X-ray Fluoreseence and atomic absortion analysis.

ATOMIC ABSORPTION SPECTROPHOTOMETRY (A.A.S.)

Two different digestions were used for iron and trace element analyses.

- (a) Perchloric acid digestion ("total" leach). 4 mls. of 70% HClO4 was added to .4 gms. of sample in a volumetrically calibrated glass test tube and heated on a sand bath at 180-200°C for 16 hours. The temperature was then raised to 240°C for 2 hours to boil off excess HClO4. The solutions were then made up to 20 mls. with distilled H2O, shaken and allowed to stand 8 hours before being alaysed.
 - (b) Hydrogen Peroxide Ascorbic Acid digestion ("sulphide" leach). The method described by Lynch (1971) was used.

The solutions were analysed for Fe, Cu, Co, Ni, Pb, Zn, Cr and Mn with an A.A.-1 instrument, using an air acetylene flame. Vanadium was analysed with an A.A.-3 instrument, using a nitrous oxide - acetylene flame. The precision of the analyses was checked by running standards with each batch. The standards used were those prepared by G. Stolz and D. Milton.

AA =10

Estimates of precision obtained from the analytical data, were -

Element	HC104	H ₂ O ₂ leach
Ni	± 2.5 p.p.m.	± 5 p.p.m.
Co	± 5 p.p.m.	± 10 p.p.m.
Cu	# 2.5 p.p.m.	± 5, p.p.m.
Po	± 5 p.p.m.	± 10 p.p.m.
Zn	± 8 p.p.m.	± 10 p.p.m.
Fe	± .05%	± .075%
Min	± 10 p.p.m.	± 5 p.p.m.
V	± 5 p.p.m.	-

The precision varies with the assay value.

For high metal values the reproducability of the results was poor because of the flattening out of the calibration curve.

loftus-Hills and Solomon (1967) in analysing Co and Ni contents of pyrite by A.A.S. have reported a supression of Co and Ni by high iron concentrations. Preliminary work was undertaken to check whether this supression would be of importance in this study. Solutions with varying Fe concentrations containing 4 p.p.m. Co and Ni in solution were made and then analysed. To and Ni contamination of the Fe solution was taken into account. The results (Fig. Al) showed that the supression of Co and Ni values was less than 0.5 p.p.m. for the range of Fe concentrations studied. Therefore it was not necessary to correct the Co and Ni assays of the Nairne Pyrite samples because the supression effect was less than the precision of the assays.

X-RAY FLUORESCENCE (X.R.F.)

Sulphur, arsenic and selenium were analysed by X.R.F. methods

SUPPRESSION of Co and Ni by Fe

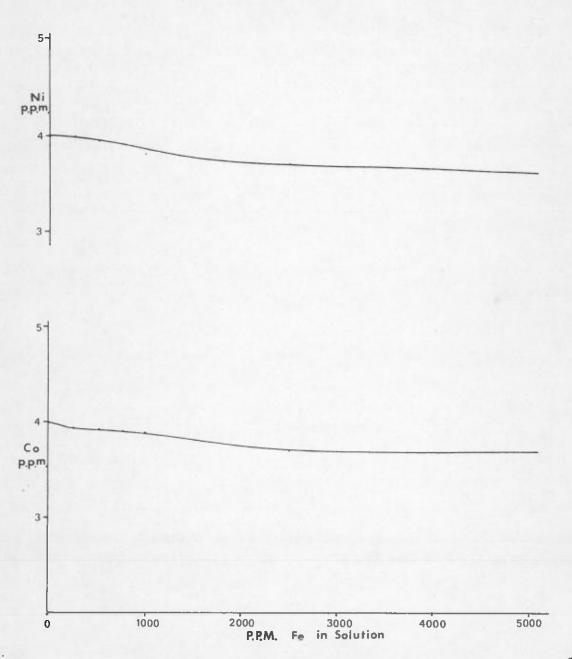


Fig. A1

using pressed mounts.

SULPHUR ANALYSES

The method developed by Stolz (1971) was used. Stolz's calibration factor was unsuitable for this study. Calibration standards were made using accurately weighed amounts of pyrite (assumed to be stoichometric FeS2) in a rook matrix obtained from the base of the Nairne Pyrite Member (sample no. 44). Standards using hexagonal and pyrrhotite from the Nairne Pyrite quarry, were The composition of the hexagonal pyrrhotite was taken made. as Fe.96S (Arnold 1966). The pyrite standards indicated that one count per second equals 7.5 p.p.m. sulphur. A calibration factor of 7.2 was obtained from the pyrrhotite standards. presence of some monoclinic pyrrhotite may be the cause of the lower factor than that obtained from the pyrite standards. In calculating the sulphur assays one count per second was taken as 7.5 p.p.m. S. This gives a correct sample to sample variation but the absolute value of sulphur obtained for a sample may have a small error.

ARSENIC ANALYSES

Arsenio was analysed by X.R.F. using method developed by

J. Sumartojo (pers. comm.). The position of the As K-alphal peak
is the same as the Pb L-alphal peak. Correction for Pb was made
by measuring the Pb L-beta peak. The ratio between the Pb K-alphal
and Pb L-beta peaks was measured on a pure PbNO3 plus quartz standard.

A 1000 p.p.m. As standard was prepared with As2O3 and quartz powder.

Operating conditions and method used

- (1) Molybdenum tube (60 K volts, 40 m. amps.)
- (2) LiF₂₂₀ crystal.
- (3) fine collimator.
- (4) Scintillation counter.
- (5) As K-alpha peak angle: 48.70° background angle: 46.80°

- (5) (continued)

 Pb K-beta peak angle: 40.27°

 background angle: 39.50°
- (6) 40 second counts were made on the four angles listed above.
- (7) the 10008 As standard was counted in each run.
- (8) Ultrasil was used to give the background slope.
- (9) The mass absorption coefficient of each sample was obtained by measuring the time to accumulate 400,000 counts on the Compton scattering peak angle (30,426°).
- (10) The counts on the As meak, corrected for background and Pb were converted to p.p.m. As by comparison with the counts on the standard. The p.p.m. As values were corrected for mass absorption by the equation:

corrected p.p.m.As = H sample H standard x p.p.m. (H = mass absorption)

SELENIUM ANALYSES

The method of G. Stolz (1971) was attempted. Problems arose because of the variability in the background slope factors measured and the low Se content of the samples. The majority of the samples had a Se content below the detection limit of 3 p.p.m.

CARBON ANALYSES

Carbon was analysed using an induction furnace at Simpson Pope's Finsbury plant. The induction furnace was linked to a small MnO2 trap to collect the SO2 produced, but because of the sulphur rich nature of the samples, the sulphides had to be removed before the analyses were done. The sulphides and any carbonates present were dissolved in concentrated hydrochloric acid.

APPENDIX TIT

TABLES OF ANALYTICAL RESULTS.

(1) Analyses of samples taken from Diamond Drill Hole No. 9. Fe and S contents are expressed as percentages. All other elements are expressed as parts per million (P.P.M.).

		ı	TOTAL	METAL	CONTE			gestion).	•	eree
San No	p.Posn. ft.	Ni.	Co	Cu	Pb	Zn	Fe	Mn	Cr	V
123456789012345678 9 012322222222333333333333444444	70 80 90 1120 120 130 140 150 170 180 170 180 170 180 180 180 180 180 180 180 180 180 18	579370888555866660800807776780555566555530 1111989777678887565555530	46305500500500500500500050050005000500050	40 72 19 10 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11	2432111322214228 7 111112180000000000000000000000000000000	620 800 1920 1920 1920 1920 1920 1920 1920 19	2.43.19.16.11.19.61.11.19.89.51.88.63.56.88.76.18.65.64.43.32.23.	7400 660 5700 5700 5700 5750 6500 5750 6500 6250 6250 6250 6250 6250 6250 62	125 125 125 125 125 126 127 127 127 127 127 127 127 127 127 127	75 105 113 113 113 113 113 113 113 113 113 11

Analyses of Diamond Drill Hole No. 9 continued.

Samp.		TAL		SULPHI				digesti	
No.	As	S	Ni.	Co.	Cu	Pb	Zn	Fe	Mn
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 2 2 2 2 2 2 2	53405855249608930582976775828070283360643363 117775828070283360643363	0.45 6.45 10.46 10	56000030055555500005500555000550055000550005500055000550005500055000550005500055000550005500050000	20 30 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20	50 73 20 50 10 20 50 50 50 50 50 50 50 50 50 50 50 50 50	20 50 0 50 0 8 50 0 5 50 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0	580 750 7500 17000	0.80 2.50 1.10 8.60 1.10 8.10 1.10 8.10 1.10 1.10 1.10 1.1	130 200 240 175 185 175 185 185 185 185 185 185 185 185 185 18

(2) Analyses of samples collected from Diamond Drill Hole No.10. Fe and S values are expressed as percentages. All other elements are reported as P.P.M.

TOTAL METAL CONTENT (HC104 digestion).

Samp. I No.	osn. ft.	Ni	Co	Cu	Pb	Zn	Fe	Mn	Cr	٧	
65 66 67 68	170 175 180 190 190 190 190 190 190 190 190 190 19	730 450 300 8850 505 0 120 300 550 500 500 500 500 500 500 500 50	90 55 75 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10	118 10605033115058 112105058 11210508 11210508 1121	655 7 5555555555555555555555555555555555	1000 620 340 360 1088 1263 1025 640 1250 1250 1300 263 880 4000 650 960 960 960 975 1625 1200 2550	9.50 9.125 12.50 14.6 13.0 11.1 17.13 11.1 13.13 11.1 13.13 11.1 13.13 11.1 13.13 11.1 13.13 11.1 13.13 11.1 13.13 11.1 13.13 11.1 13.13 1	425 250 475 550 275 300 275 300 375 280 275 275 350 650 700 2050 2175 37500 1850	125 130 130 175 120 175 120 120 125 125 1430 150 150 150 150 150 150 150 150 150 15	100 90 63 75 100 83 100 75 63 100 75 63 130 130 170 130 175 188 175 188 113 113 130	

Analyses of Diamond Drill Hole No. 10 continued.

Samp.	OT	TAL	S	ULPHI	DE ME	TAL (H ₂ O ₂ d	igesti	on)
	As	S	Ni	Co	Cu	Pb	Zn	Fe	Mn
44444555555555666666666666666666666666	5 10 7 d0 24 21 12 0 7 d0 23 3 9 d 3 d 5 5 4 0 9 2	7.56 6.50 3.85 10.45 17.15 12.45 17.15 12.33 12.33 13.01 13.01 13.01 13.01 13.01 13.01 13.01 13.01 13.01 15.21 15.	70 60 55 50 95 50 50 70 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10	80 65 40 65 98 50 65 90 65 90 10 80 65 90 10 80 65 90 10 80 65 90 10 80 80 80 80 80 80 80 80 80 80 80 80 80	130 100 100 100 120 120 120 120 120 120 12	50 20 95 65 50 50 50 50 50 50 50 50 50 50 50 50 50	1025 550 340 1050 1100 1180 540 1275 2225 355 1200 830 4000 490 80 775 980 2750 950 2750 9600 2600	12.3 11.0 5.5 17.0 17.0 17.0 17.0 18.0 17.0 18.0 19.0 19.0 19.0 19.0 19.0 19.0 19.0 19	210 100 180 180 140 125 180 125 160 160 70 140 270 300 440 2900 775 440 385 180 310

Carbon Analyses.

Grouped Sample Numbers.

C content (percent)

3,	4	0.11
5,	6	0,60
7,	8	0.74
9,	10, 11	1.65
12,	13	0.79
14,	, 15	2.43
16,	17	2,07
18,	19	2,29
20,	21	1,38
22,	23	1,94
24,	25	1.23
26,	27	0.97
28,	. 29	0,98
32,	33	2.04
34,	35	1 _e 04
38,	39	O _• 32