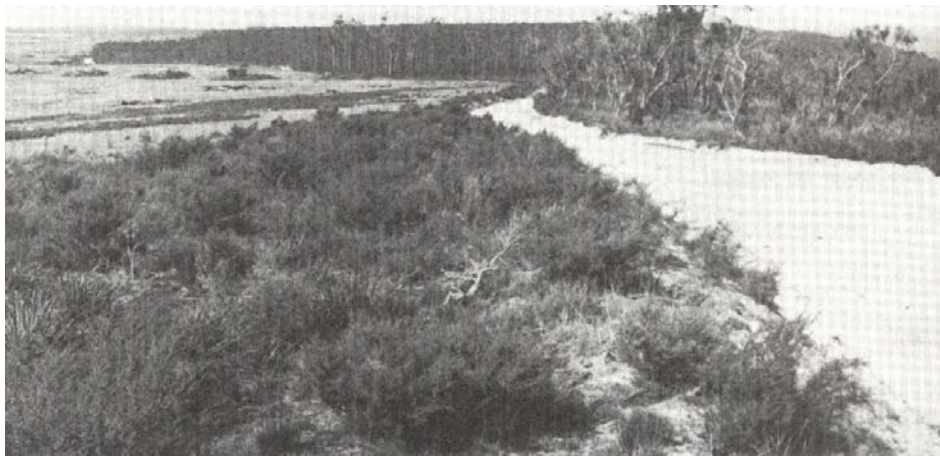


7.16 Ferguson Hill Land System

Most outcrops of Tertiary sediments to the west of the Otway Range are either deeply dissected or deeply weathered soils. However, some ridges and spurs are only mildly dissected and their soil profiles are only weakly developed. These areas are found at Ferguson Hill, just south of Simpson, along Pipeline Road and in an additional small area near Cape Otway.

The parent material is Tertiary sand, silt and clay, with some minor areas of lateritic ironstone. The soils vary according to the nature of the outcropping beds, but in general their structure is weak and often the A and B horizons are not clearly differentiated. Profile drainage is good on all but those areas with hardpans, and these are the only areas prone to waterlogging despite the high annual rainfall.

Eucalyptus obliqua and *E. baxteri* colonize most areas and often reach heights in excess of 30 m on the better-drained soils. However, these stands are decreasing in areas as much of the land is being cleared for agriculture. The soils are naturally quite stable and the major problems are likely to arise from nutrient decline.



Along Pipeline Road the dissection is only mildly developed on these comparatively youthful soils. In the foreground E. nitida grown on grey sand soils, while in the distance tall open woodlands occur on red gradational soils with weak structures.

