25. MT. DRYDEN LAND-SYSTEM

A broken chain of isolated low hills to the east of the Grampians and in a line roughly parallel to them makes up the Mt. Dryden land-system. The northern end of the chain is between Mt. Drummond and Lake Lonsdale and the southern end is just outside the survey area at Mt. Stavely near Glenthompson.

The rocks comprising the hills are Cambrian greenstones, cherts and shales and are the oldest in the survey. The hills are 200 to 300 feet higher than the alluvial plains and they are considered to be erosion residuals protruding through the alluvium. The only other land-form apart from the hills is a small area of rolling plain at Mt. Dryden, the largest and highest outcrop (Figure 29).

Rock outcrops are scattered extensively over some of the hills and skeletal brown loams are associated with them. Apart from the outcrops, solodic soils have developed in which a fine sandy loam overlies clay at ten to thirteen inches below the surface.

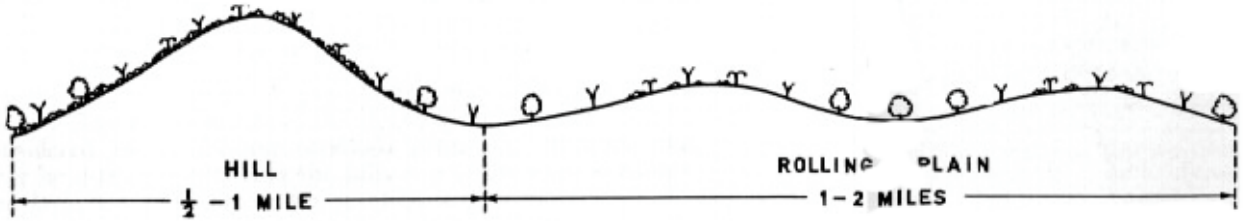
Extensive clearing of the hills has left them with scattered trees and a pasture of native grasses. The eucalypt remnants indicate that a savannah woodland of red gum and yellow box once grew on the lower slopes of the hills and over the rolling plain, with yellow box and sheoke on the higher positions.

Pasture improvement has been prevented by the steep slopes and rocky terrain except for the spread of subterranean clover from introduced pastures in the paddocks on the surrounding plains. Most of the hills are small enough to be included within the boundaries of one or two paddocks and there is a need to realign the fences to control grazing on the hills.

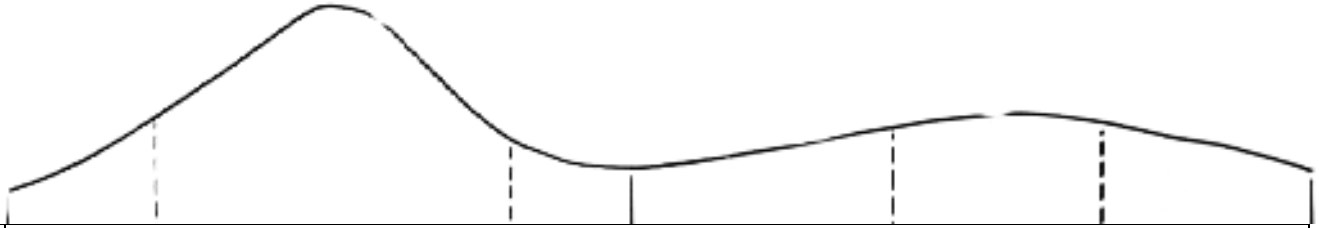
The slopes create a high erosion hazard and sheet erosion is prevalent. Carefully controlled grazing to encourage a dense cover of native perennial grasses is the best and cheapest way of improving the situation.

MT DRYDEN LAND-SYSTEM

(i) Distribution of land-forms



(ii) Land-system diagram



Climate		Average annual rainfall 21-23 inches : growing season April to October						
Land Form		Hill			Rolling plain			
Geology		Cambrian greenstones, cherts and shales						
Topography		Mostly steep slopes >10%			Moderate slopes 5-10%			
Soil		Skeletal and solodic soils			Solodic soils (dominant), skeletal (minor)			
Land Class		4A	5	4A	2B	5	2B	
Land Use	Present	Wool growing on native and introduced pastures						
	Problems	To control grazing and improve the pastures						
Water Erosion	Hazard	High			Moderate			
	Actual	Moderate sheet erosion			Moderate sheet erosion			
Native Vegetation	Structure	Originally a short woodland on the upper slopes and a tall woodland on the lower slopes						
	Species	Red gum yellow box	Yellow box, sheoke		Red gum, yellow box		Yellow box, sheoke	Red gum, yellow box

Figure 29 – Mt Dryden Land System