NOTES AND NEWS

ESKOLAITE, Cr_2O_3, IN "MERUMITE" FROM BRITISH GUIANA*

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The account by Kuovo and Vuorelainen on page 1098 of this issue of the discovery in Finland of eskolaite, chromic oxide, makes it of interest to report that the same mineral is a major constituent of black pebbles found in the bed of the Merume River, British Guiana. The pebbles, normally under a centimeter in size, but occasionally ten times as large, were described by Bracewell (1946) as a new mineral, merumite. Actually, merumite is not a simple mineral, or even an essentially single though impure species, but rather an aggregate of eskolaite and possibly two new chromium oxide minerals with quartz, pyrophyllite, and perhaps other substances. We are now studying merumite, and at a later date will present our findings.

Eskolaite from British Guiana has not been analyzed—only various specimens of merumite. One analysis of merumite is given by Bracewell, and others have since been made by commercial firms. Cr_2O_3 generally exceeds 75%, alumina and water 7% or 8% each, and silica, iron, titania from about 1% to 5%. Vanadium is less than 0.2%. The *x*-ray diffraction patterns of the British Guiana eskolaite (which has a characteristic green streak by which it may be recognized) and that of commercial reagent anhydrous chromic oxide, Cr_2O_3, are identical.

At present little is known of the provenance of the British Guiana merumite. All the specimens studied were free from any matrix rock, and the material has been found only in the stream gravels. None of the minerals listed by Kuovo and Vuorelainen as associated with the eskolaite in Finland has been found in our samples of merumite.

We are indebted to Dr. R. B. McConnell, Director of the Geological Survey of British Guiana, and to Murray R. Director, President of the Director International Corporation, New York City, who have generously given us noteworthy specimens of merumite for study.

REFERENCE

BRACEWELL, SMITH (1946), The geology and mineral resources of British Guiana. Handbook of natural resources of British Guiana, Georgetown, 1946. Sec. 4, p. 18–40; Mineralogical Abstracts **10**,, p. 292 (1948).

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