

# YOUR COOPERATION

## IS INVITED IN AN IMPORTANT INQUIRY

In the past few years there has been some discussion about the question whether or not it is desirable to replace the name geo-sciences or earth-sciences by *geonomy*. The advantages of the name geonomy are: (1) it would eliminate confusion arising from present-day awkward terminology; (2) it is a short name; (3) it is a singular word; (4) it can easily be internationalized; (5) an adjective and a name for its students can easily be derived from it, whereas it is not possible to do this from the equivalent term of earth-sciences in, e.g., Russian, French, or Dutch; (6) in this way a direct analogy is created to the composite pattern of other sciences: as, for instance, astrophysics is part of astronomy, geophysics is then part of geonomy; (7) geonomy is a pure word, as opposed to geo-sciences, which is a combination of a Greek stem with an English word of Latin origin.

The following objections have so far been noted against the word geonomy to denote collectively all the sciences which deal with our planet, its lithosphere, hydrosphere and atmosphere: (1) etymologically geonomy stems from the Greek "nomos", which means "law"; the earth-sciences are still rather far from being able to formulate laws comparable to those in astronomy, physics or chemistry for example, and thus far from a justified use of the term "nomos" (but astronomy did not have the status that as it has today either when the name was introduced); (2) the status of the science is not advanced by the introduction of still another synonym, such as geonomy; (3) the word has too much similarity with "geognosy", an antiquated term, synonymous for geology; (4) replacement of the name geo-sciences by geonomy is only meaningful if one, clear definition of geonomy is generally accepted by geo-scientists all over the world.

In connection with objection (4) in particular, we would greatly appreciate your completing question (1) on the attached questionnaire.

A second important matter relates to the existence of *language barriers* in scientific communication. Several (as yet mainly unpublished) investigations by the second author show that these barriers are of a very serious nature and have a great negative impact on the progress of science.

Results obtained thus far by the World Inquiry, initiated by the first author, indicate that the need for a world language of science is universally felt. In order to find out if ways can be found to overcome present-day language problems, and if so, how it can be done, you are sincerely invited to complete the few questions on the attached form.

Since many copies of the journals participating in this inquiry go to institutes, services, and companies, rather than to individual subscribers, three copies of the questionnaire are included. Please use only one and persuade your colleagues to complete the other two. The completed forms should be sent to the Organizing Committee, Ústřední ústav geologický, Malostranské nám.19, Prague 1 (Czechoslovakia), preferably as soon as possible, but at any rate *not later than May 31, 1968*. This will enable us to announce the results of this inquiry at a special meeting devoted to the discussion of these problems, which will be held during the 23rd International Geological Congress meeting, in Prague in August 1968.

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