

DEPT. OF MINERALOGY AND PETROLOGY  
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Downing Street  
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Dear Monsieur Guillemin,

Thank you for your letter of some weeks ago to which I delayed replying until receipt of the new circular from the American Committee.

I think that you have rather mis-interpreted my own attitude on this matter. It is not in the least that I am opposed to a Union, but only that I feel we must go somewhat more slowly. We have, in England, been working for some time to prepare the ground, but, especially in international matters, one must go slowly. One has to talk with many people, as only in this way can the best tactic be worked out. The first circular, prejudging the issue by using the term 'Union' was a tactical error which has now been repaired.

The trouble is that mineralogists have a bad record in the field of international co-operation; only now, with the maturing of our science and the big increase in the new generation of mineralogists, is it possible to begin. But we would have no real case against the opposition which we would be sure to meet in ICSU. A far better tactic is to form an international association and work together for a few years, thus showing that we are ready for the Union form of organisation in practice. A premature application would be sure to fail, and this would make it more difficult to get a second application accepted in the near future.

In any case, it will be excellent to have the whole matter discussed at Montreal; one can always say more than is advisable to print in a public document. I fully support the practical suggestions for international working together which you put forward to the Committee, and I have written to say this to Prof. Buerger. We are being careful to keep the whole question of abstracts quite open as we have long had the idea that this should be taken over by our future Union. All such activities should be done by Unions in the future, and we shall be the first to put our hitherto purely British Abstracts into the common pool. In our field, which is relatively small compared with Chemistry and Physics, we have a chance to lead the world in the internationalisation of abstracts and related matters.

I do not yet know if I shall be able to visit Paris in April, but I so I shall write again to you in the hope of being able to arrange a talk.

Yours sincerely,

*N. F. M. Henry*