

4th August, 1910.

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## FEDERAL GEOLOGICAL SURVEY.

## Victorian Government Geologist's Views.

A proposal was emanated from the Victorian Chamber of Mines and the Australian Institute of Mining Engineers that a Federal geological survey should be established. The proposal has been brought before the Victorian Minister for Mines, who intends to discuss it with the Minister for Mines of New South Wales and the Ministers of any of the other States that he may have an opportunity of meeting before going further into the matter.

In the meantime Mr. G.J. Dunn, Director of Geological Survey of Victoria, has furnished a memorandum bringing under notice of the Minister some aspects of its proposal as they appear to him, having special regard to Victoria.

Mr. Dunn says:-

Should a Federal survey be established, it would mean that Victoria would be taxed heavily for the purpose of carrying on the work over the whole of the rest of the continent, and, if on a per capita basis, the expense to this State would be serious, for the population of Victoria is, in round numbers, two-sevenths of that of the Commonwealth, while the area of Victoria is only one thirty-third of the Commonwealth area. In other words, on a population basis, Victoria's share of contribution is a Federal geological survey would be nearly a third, or 33 times what it should be according to proportionate area. The work already done in Victoria also is greater in proportion to the whole area than in the other States, and what remains to be done is well within the power of the staff to accomplish within a reasonable time.

The total area of Victoria is 87,884 square miles. Of this an area amounting to 32,534 square miles consists of tertiary plains, that will not require a detailed course of survey, leaving 55,350 square miles, of which 15,847 square miles have been already mapped as quarter sheets, or as rapid surveys, leaving 39,503 square miles still to be surveyed. The quality of the work will stand comparison with any of the other surveys. Whether a Federal geological survey swallowed up the present organisations, or whether such a survey was in addition to them, Victoria could only lose, and gain nothing.

As to the desirability in a general way of establishing such a survey, the opinions of the several men who are in charge of the geological surveys, and who in their several States know the special conditions, should be of greater value than the views of those who have not the responsibilities of conducting the surveys; and it might perhaps be desirable that a congress of these officers should meet in Melbourne or elsewhere to express their opinions on this subject, but more especially in respect to details of methods of work and the harmonising as far as possible the scales and colours to be adopted.

Personally, I consider it quite premature to discuss a Federal survey, and I am thoroughly convinced that better work and more valuable results would be obtained by strengthening the present organisations than by inaugurating a new one.

Sir,

I have the honor to forward herewith a copy of a letter I have received from the Government Geologist, Mr. W.H. Twelvetrees, with reference to the proposed Federal Geological Survey Scheme, which has been brought under the notice of the Commonwealth Prime Minister by the Victorian Chamber of Mines, and a copy of the Victorian Government Geologist's views on the subject, which appears in the Zeehan and Dundas Herald of the 4th instant, for your careful consideration.

Mr. Twelvetrees has gone very fully into the matter, and I think his views and suggestions will meet with your approval.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

Signed W.H. Wallace

Secretary for Mines.

The Hon.

Erused

The Minister for Mines

A.R. Solomon

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OFFICE, 118

LAUNCESTON, TASMANIA,

AUGUST 5th., 1910.

W.H. Wallace, Esq.,  
Secretary for Mines,  
HOBART.

Dear Sir,

Under separate cover I beg to forward you a memorandum dealing with the Federal Geological Survey scheme now being urged on the Commonwealth Prime Minister by the Victorian Chamber of Mines and Australian Institute of Mining Engineers.

I thought it was well that you should have my view upon it in case you are approached.

The Tasmanian University has decided to support the proposal and to urge the State Government to do likewise.

So far the promoters are not approaching the State departments, but are stirring up outside bodies to help them in the agitation.

The establishment of a Federal Bureau would seriously curtail and injure our own activities as the financial resources of the State could not bear the double burden. The Prime Minister appears to favour the idea of the Commonwealth taking a hand, but thinks Legislation would be necessary before it could assume control.

I have thought this opportunity expedient to make some suggestions for the extension of our work. Some of these I consider are of great importance.

Yours truly,

W.H. TWELVETREES.

GOVERNMENT GEOLOGIST.