Letters To the Editor

Sir:

Regarding the article "Principal Achievements in Soviet Geocryology", v. 12, no. 2.

Cryolite has been pre-empted to designate a sodium aluminum fluoride. May I suggest cryosphere (AGI, 1972) in place of cryolite zone.

Ingo Ermanovics
Precambrian Division
Geological Survey of Canada
588 Booth Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0E4

(Copy of a letter sent to:)
The Honourable Pat Carney
Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario

Dear Minister:

The Canadian Geophysical Union represents professional solid-earth geophysicists in industry, government and universities across Canada. At our recent executive meeting in Toronto, the June 1985 report of the external review committee on the Earth Physics Branch (EPB) of Energy, Mines and Resources was tabled for discussion.

The review committee, comprising six respected Canadian and U.S. scientists, reached two principal conclusions. First, a governmental organization devoted specifically to comprehensive research in geophysics and its application is vital to Canada. Second, the Earth Physics Branch is the only organization that fills this role.

The Canadian Geophysical Union executive, having carefully read the report and based furthermore on our individual experience with the EPB's work, heartily endorse these recommendations. The Earth Physics Branch is clearly in good health scientifically and continuing to provide vital services to the public. Its reputation in the world scientific community continues to be high.

We are therefore dismayed by the possibility that the Earth Physics Branch and the Geological Survey of Canada (GSC) might be merged. Any resulting savings in administrative costs would likely be minor. The scientific cost of a merger, on the other hand, could be very high, now and in the future.

Geophysics and geology have many areas of common interest and application. In these areas, the EPB and the GSC can continue, as in the past, to co-operate as equal partners. In other areas, for example assessing earthquake risk, monitoring geomagnetic activity and its effect on radio wave transmission, surveying the gravity field over Canada (an area with particular military implications), and geothermal studies, a different and much broader community than the geological one is being served, and the principal expertise is centred in the EPB. In these and other similar areas, the EPB definitely should continue its independent initiatives.

A point worth emphasizing is that EPB scientists, individually and collectively, have built a world-class reputation in geophysics. The achievements of the Earth Physics Branch, the outgrowth of three-quarters of a century of scientific activity, should be a source of pride to Canadians. A high scientific reputation is not easily nor quickly built, and EPB's formula for success is not to be tampered with lightly.

We hope that our expressions of feelings that are widely held in the Canadian geophysical community will be of help to you in decisions your Ministry may make.

David J. Dunlop
President, Canadian Geophysical Union