

APPROPRIATIONS FOR FEDERAL GEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

ACCORDING to information sent by Science Service the elimination of fundamental geologic research in the U. S. Geological Survey and its investigation of mineral resources in Alaska is threatened in the appropriation bill for the Department of the Interior for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1934, reported in the House of Representatives on December 16.

The appropriations committee has eliminated completely the items for "fundamental research, geologic science" for which the budget estimated \$46,470 and the item for "investigation of mineral resources in Alaska" for which the budget estimate was \$60,180. In all the committee-recommended appropriations for the U. S. Geological Survey are \$457,400 less than the budget estimates of \$2,384,900.

Volcanologic surveys, largely in Hawaii, remain in the bill with \$12,500, which is \$2,500 less than the appropriations for 1933 and \$6,010 less than the budget's recommendations.

If the appropriations for fundamental geologic research are not restored when the bill is considered by the House, the progress of geology in this country will be dealt a severe blow. The federal Geological Survey is the nation's principal research agency in geology, cooperating with universities and a few mining and oil companies which provide the only other organization supporting geological science.

The lack of appropriations for the Alaskan explorations would bring to an abrupt end the pioneer service under frontier conditions that was begun more than 30 years ago. Less than half of Alaska has been covered by the topographic and geologic maps necessary for any utilization of its resources.

Twelve investigators who have made geological service to the nation their life work would no longer be able to serve the public if the fundamental geologic research is killed by lack of appropriation. Cuts in geologic research have already been made, the budget recommendation of \$46,600 being less than half of the \$100,000 expended in the 1932 fiscal year. The elimination of Alaskan resources investigations would affect over twenty employees. The expenditures in 1932 for this work amounted to \$84,500.

Other cuts included in the nearly half-million dollars eliminated from the reduced appropriations for topographic surveys by \$62,000, geologic surveys by \$35,700, stream gaging by \$81,400, printing and engraving geologic maps by \$64,170, investigations of minerals on public lands by \$25,180, classification of lands by \$72,950, general salaries by \$3,340.

The whole Department of Interior bill recommends appropriations of \$43,192,904 which is less than the budget estimates by \$2,891,025. The only appropria-

tions singled out for complete elimination in the whole bill are those for fundamental geological work and Alaska resources investigations of the U. S. Geological Survey.

So important are the geologic surveys, fundamental research and the Alaskan researches considered that under the economy act passed by Congress last spring additional funds for the current year were transferred by the Secretary of the Interior to these essential activities. Actual funds available for geologic surveys and fundamental research combined were \$500,000 in 1932 fiscal year, \$419,750 in 1933 fiscal year compared with the \$300,000 proposed for geologic surveys and nothing for fundamental research proposed in the House committee report, a reduction of 40 per cent. in two years. For the Alaskan work \$69,000 is currently available, compared with nothing recommended.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AND THE TARIFF ON LABORATORY EQUIPMENT

THE *U. S. Daily* reports that the board of trustees of the University of Illinois on Dec. 6 filed a petition with the Supreme Court of the United States seeking a review of the ruling that the university is required to pay customs duties on laboratory equipment imported from abroad and used in educational work.

It is contended in the petition for a writ of certiorari that the imposition of customs duties on the equipment involved constitutes an unconstitutional burden and tax upon a state governmental agency. The university claims that it is a governmental agency of the State of Illinois, and that the equipment was imported in the exercise of a governmental as distinguished from a proprietary function. The Supreme Court is asked to hear the case and apply to it the rule that the Federal Government has no power to tax a state or any of the governmental agencies of a state.

Review is sought of the decision, with two judges dissenting, of the Court of Customs and Patent Appeals. The lower court stated in the majority opinion that it was necessary to determine in the case whether the university is a governmental agency. It was held that the rule sought to be invoked by the university is not applicable since the tariff law imposing the customs duties was an exercise by Congress of its power to regulate foreign commerce, and that Congress, having the sole power to regulate such commerce under the commerce clause of the Federal Constitution, has the power to subject merchandise imported by a state to customs duties.

The petition was filed by Attorney General Oscar E. Carlstrom, of Illinois, and Sveinbjorn Johnson, counsel for the Board of Trustees. Attorneys General of the States of California, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky,