

## Association Affairs

### AAPG Action on the Visscher Report

When the report of the Special Committee on the Civil Liberties of Scientists was referred to the AAAS Council for action early in 1949, approximately half (130) the Council members voted or submitted written opinions, and of those voting there was a 4-to-1 majority endorsing the report. Among those dissenting were the representatives of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists, who referred the report to their Executive Committee. Following long discussion, involving correspondence with the Washington office of the AAAS and a conference between the Administrative Secretary and W. T. Thom, Jr., one of the representatives of the petroleum geologists on the AAAS Council, the AAPG took the action recorded below.

HOWARD A. MEYERHOFF,  
*Administrative Secretary*

At the annual convention of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists in Chicago, April 24-27, the Executive Committee of AAPG, consisting of five elected officers, unanimously recommended to the Business Committee of AAPG passage of the following resolution in re the report to AAAS of the Visscher Committee on Civil Liberties of Scientists. It was presented together with the explanatory preamble which also follows.

The Business Committee of AAPG consists of 62 members, including representatives from all geographical areas where any considerable number of members of that Association reside. Fifty members were present at the annual meeting of this committee on April 24th. They unanimously approved the resolution and the preamble for presentation to the annual business meeting of the membership of the Association. At the latter meeting, on April 27th, after hearing the preamble, the resolution was adopted, again unanimously.

C. W. TOMLINSON,  
*Past President*

#### REPORT OF REPRESENTATIVES ON COUNCIL OF AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE

(From minutes of 35th Annual Meeting of American Association of Petroleum Geologists, April 27, 1950.)

#### AAAS and Visscher Report

The American Association of Petroleum Geologists some years ago accepted affiliation with the American Association for the Advancement of Science. AAPG has two representatives on the Council of AAAS.

During the presidency of Harlow Shapley, the executive

committee of AAAS appointed a "Special Committee on the Civil Liberties of Scientists," of which Maurice B. Visscher was chairman. This committee submitted a report on December 18, 1948, which was summarized in *Science*, issue of August 19, 1949. In that summary it was stated that "The full text was referred to the Council, which voted by an overwhelming majority to publicize the findings."

Our representatives on the AAAS Council, R. J. Riggs and W. T. Thom, Jr., desire the members of the AAPG to know that they voted against acceptance of that report; and that the said "overwhelming majority," because of the large number of councilors not voting, actually constituted only a minority of the council.

The Visscher report specifically recommended that no basic scientific research done for the Government be considered restricted or kept secret; and that no loyalty tests or investigations be instituted against any scientist in Government employ, except those directly engaged in the application of science to the design or manufacture of secret weapons. The report urged substantial restriction of loyalty investigations.

After full discussion with our representatives on the Council of AAAS, the executive committee of the AAPG unanimously recommends, and the business committee of AAPG hereby recommends, that the American Association of Petroleum Geologists pass the following resolution, to dissociate ourselves publicly from the AAAS recommendations:

#### RESOLUTION

The American Association of Petroleum Geologists recognizes that, as Secretary Acheson has said, the United States is "engaged in a struggle that is crucial from the point of view of the continued existence of our way of life."

The AAPG further recognizes the urgent necessity, under these circumstances, of preventing information of scientific or other nature, vital to our safety, from falling into the hands of a possible enemy.

Totalitarianism has proved itself far more destructive to the liberties of scientists and restrictive of scientific progress than any laws or regulations imposed by the United States in the interest of security or national defense.

The fact that restricted data can be readily and secretly transmitted to unauthorized persons and that the national security can be endangered by even a single disloyal scientist has been amply demonstrated. The Fuchs case offers an example.

The AAPG believes that all loyal citizens of the nation, whatever their category, must be united without reservation in support of the measures deemed necessary by the Federal authorities for the security and defense of the nation. We believe that no loyal citizen, whether scientist or not, should object to investigation of his loyalty. Therefore, although secrecy may for a time impede our scientific progress, we shall abide by such security requirements. We take pride in our readiness, cheerfully and wholeheartedly, to prove our loyalty and patriotism in case of inquiry.