

December 18, 1956

Committee to Investigate the Possibility of Establishing an International Union of Mineralogy

American members

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Gentlemen:

At the November 1, 1956, meeting of the Mineralogical Society of America, the possibility of forming an International Union of Mineralogy was brought up. After a discussion, it was moved and seconded that the president appoint a committee to investigate the possibility of forming an International Union of Mineralogy. The motion was unanimously passed. I had the impression that the unanimous passage was not a trivial act but really represented the concurrent decisions of all the individuals present.

There seem to be several reasons why the mineralogists at this time are so much interested in an International Union of Mineralogy. For some years there has been an International Union of Crystallography. This is a successful and strong union and holds a congress in a different country every three years. Since this Union is centered around crystallography, it naturally pays little attention to mineralogy as such and, in fact, it can hardly pay more attention to it because its meetings are already so crowded that it is not uncommon to hold three simultaneous sessions. A comparatively minor meeting of this Union was held at Madrid this past April, and although the meeting was not well publicized, it was overcrowded, and there were indeed three simultaneous sessions on crystallography. This year, there was also held the Twentieth International Geological Congress. This was a very well attended meeting and it had no time to devote to mineralogy.

The occurrence in one year of these two congresses concerned with sciences close to mineralogy, yet omitting mineralogy, indicated to mineralogists that they are without international organization. In my opinion this realization was behind the unanimous vote to investigate forming an International Union of Mineralogy.

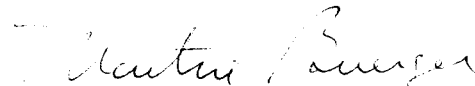
It is the function of this committee to consider the possibility of forming such a Union. I invite each of you, therefore,

to send me your comments on this subject, to reach me not later than 1 February 1957. When these comments are received, I will make digests of them and distribute these to the entire committee for further consideration. It seems to me that if this committee concurs with the Society which appointed it that it is desirable to attempt to form an International Union of Mineralogy, that we should immediately procede to communicate as a committee with the several mineralogical societies of the world asking for their reaction to this suggestion. If the reaction is favorable, presumably the several societies can send delegates to a meeting to consider the nature and scope of a Union.

It may be that sufficient action can be taken by the several societies in advance of the meeting of the Fourth Congress of the International Union of Crystallography in Montreal July 10-17, 1957, so that delegated members of these societies attending the International Union of Crystallography Congress can hold a preliminary meeting concerned with a possible Union of Mineralogy.

Please let me have your thoughts on these matters as soon as possible and in any event, not later than 1 February 1957.

Sincerely yours,



M. J. Buerger
Chairman