



The Bancroft Library
University of California, Berkeley

**Letter to The President and the Board of Trustees of the Carnegie
Institution of Washington May 1, 1907**

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May 1, 1907.

The President and the Board of Trustees of the Carnegie Institution of Washington.

Gentlemen:

In the midst of the distress and confusion consequent upon the earthquake of April 18, 1906, it was a source of great satisfaction to scientific men in California, and indeed thruout the country generally, to find in the Carnegie Institution of Washington a ready appreciation of the opportunity which the event afforded of adding to our knowledge of earth-science.

The local Commission which had been promptly appointed was practically helpless to carry out its program of investigation until your honorable body came to its succor and, by a liberal subvention, made it possible to conduct that investigation in the manner which the circumstances demanded. The results of the investigation have now been reduced to order, and are nearly ready for publication under your auspices.

In the judgment of the Commission charged with the conduct of the work, it is a matter of importance that these results should be well distributed in California, even if on principles which do not apply ordinarily to your scientific publications. A large number of the more intelligent people of the State are keenly interested in the scientific aspects of the earthquake; and it is rarely that primary facts of the evolution of the earth's crust are

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brought home to them so forcibly. It is therefore believed by the Commission that there will be an exceptionally large number of copies of the report purchased, and in determining the size of the edition this exceptional demand should be taken into account. If means were taken to bring to the attention of the people of California the fact that the report is for sale, there is little doubt that several hundred copies would be sold. This would involve advertising in the channels which reach not only college professors and others engaged in scientific work, but also the people at large. If an arbitrary price could be set upon the volume in advance of its publication, the Commission could, I feel sure, devise means of properly advertising its sale and obtaining advance subscriptions for its purchase.

But apart from the exceptional size of the edition to meet the prospective demands of purchasers, the circumstances under which the investigation has been conducted warrant the issue of a rather larger number of gratuitous copies than is usually the case. The work of the Commission would scarcely have been possible without the active co-operation of many people in various parts of the State. The Commission feels under great obligations to these co-workers in the effort to get together all the facts throwing light upon the significance of

the earthquake as an event of the highest scientific importance; and the only way in which it seems possible for the Commission to satisfy that obligation will be to send to every one of these co-workers a copy of the report. It is believed that by so doing not only would the obligation be met, but also that the Carnegie Institution

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of Washington would be availing itself of an exceptional opportunity for spreading the knowledge of science among persons who would appreciate the knowledge and benefit thereby. It would not be giving something for nothing. The proposed recipients have given us much help, and the Commission is loath to be placed in the position of receiving such aid without being able to return the compliment in the usual way.

There are over 300 persons who have aided the Commission in the way indicated. The customary quota of authors' extras, divided among the eight men constituting the Commission, will not do more than meet the requirements of their respective scientific exchange lists; so that the obligation referred to cannot be met from this source.

In addition to the above considerations, it should be mentioned that there are nearly 100 seismological stations in the various parts of the world which have contributed to the volume their records of the California earthquake, and to which our report should be sent as a matter of courtesy, as well as in the interests of science.

Trusting that this presentation of the point of view of the Commission in these matters will have weight with your honorable body, in determining the size of the edition of the volume on the California earthquake, and that you will pardon this intrusion upon your attention

I have the honor to be

Very respectfully yours

Chairman State Earthquake Investigation Commission.