

ABSTRACTS OF TECHNICAL PAPERS

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 "Professional Certification and Registration
 and the AAPG"

The paper published under this title in the A.A.P.G. Bulletin for March 1964 was the result of the previous year of study by the author during his term of office as President of A.A.P.G., in collaboration with the rest of the Executive Committee. Prior to publication the paper passed through an evolutionary process that involved alterations and contributions by the Executive Committee, the District Representatives and Chairmen of Standing as well as Special Committees of A.A.P.G., and from members of as many affiliated societies as it was feasible to discuss the subject with. The objective of this fairly thorough exposure of the principles of Professional Certification as applied to Petroleum Geologists was two-fold:

1. To acquaint the membership with the problem, in order that they might be in a better position to judge as to the merits and de-merits of certification, if the matter should be brought to a vote in accordance with the recommendation of the Executive Committee.

2. To obtain a broad range of ideas on the subject from the members themselves, in order that all such ideas might be presented to the membership at large through the Bulletin, prior to putting the question to a vote. It is worthy of note that, under the present constitution, the Executive Committee would have been within their rights to introduce certification on a voluntary basis, without referral to the membership. The procedure followed, however, was in the nature of a calculated risk that was considered worth attempting on grounds of membership education on that subject. It was also felt that, as the subject is a controversial one, it should not be forced on the membership against their will.

Voluntary certification of its own members by A.A.P.G. involves the practice of having the Association place its seal of approval as certified professional geologists

on those active members who apply for it and are able to meet the necessary requirements. The "necessary" qualifications are those of an active member of the Association who has had at least two more years of experience in responsible work in petroleum geology, or closely related disciplines, beyond those required for active membership.

The question has been asked at this point why is "certification" necessary when active membership by itself should serve to qualify a person for full "professional" status? The answer given is that some active members joined under a constitution that is different from that now in existence. Some of them for example were not petroleum geologists by training and have never practiced as such. A few are private promoters having no connection with geology, either directly or in a supervisory or liaison capacity. In order to avoid discrimination and at the same time to be effectively selective, in the interests of the membership and of the public, the procedure for certification recommended requires that:

"At the time of application the member shall submit complete and up-to-date data as to the nature of his specialties and experience, which shall have been substantially in petroleum or closely related geological fields of practice."

The published paper describes some of the problems leading to the need for certification. Studies of the problem of registration for geologists carried out by A.G.I. over the past several years are referred to, as well as closely related problems of professionalism and the registration of engineers. In the process of clarifying these relationships it becomes obvious that certification is a step that can lead to registration if the certified geologist so desires.

A professional petroleum geologist is defined in relation to his scientific, ethical or other professional characteristics and in relation to other closely related geological, geophysical and engineering characteristics. An attempt is made to stress these relationships and to urge that geologists make an effort to understand their natural affiliation with other closely related earth scientists and engineers. In order to illustrate the natural

affiliations with other closely related specialties it was also necessary to define professional engineers and association active members and to point out the similarities in their academic and professional backgrounds, codes of ethics and modes of procedures.

An abbreviated summary of the principal conclusions arrived at in the study is that:

1. Some A.A.P.G. members neither require nor desire certification, whereas others both desire and require it in order to carry out their work successfully.

2. Certification of many scientific specialties (and registration as required) has been proven to be beneficial both to the specialists concerned and to the public.

3. The established practice of registering engineers, many of whom are more closely related to certain geological specialties than they are to other engineering specialties, places geologists at a competitive disadvantage.

4. Problems of non-uniformity in academic and other aspects of professional standards from state to state, or from one area to another, will to some extent be corrected for petroleum geologists, on a worldwide basis, through the certification of A.A.P.G. members.

5. A.A.P.G. should not represent itself as being the only means for certification of petroleum geologists qualified for registration. The Association does, however, possess the natural facilities for greatly simplifying the procedure on a very effective and practical basis. No other organization on earth can speak for the professional integrity and qualifications of petroleum geologists on an authoritative basis.

6. Although it is recognized that many petroleum geologists require to be registered, registration by A.A.P.G. of its own members is neither desirable nor feasible. It is, however, hoped that some of the problems of certification and/or liaison with local registration bodies can be assumed by affiliated geological societies.

In keeping the conclusions arrived at the Executive Committee recommended that the Business Committee propose an amendment to the Constitution that would in effect empower the Association to certify to its own members, on a purely voluntary basis.

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Subsequent to the publication of this paper, at the Annual Association Business Meeting, held in May 1964, the proposed amendment was passed and subsequently approved in a vote of the membership, by a substantial majority.

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"Mineral Diversification in the Oil Industry"

It appears inevitable that in the future the oil industry will be faced with some of the largest mining projects ever conceived if it is to maintain its position in the energy field. It will take organization and planning to meet the new era of fuel development ahead. Development of tar sands, oil shales, offshore mineral deposits and many other large natural resources in this country and throughout the world offers an inviting opportunity for oil companies to expand their operations into new investment fields.

One fundamental precept in the industry is that investments in natural resources must continue if the industry is to prosper. The potential for growth in the petroleum business still exists, of course, but the industry is faced with a number of problems, as you well know. These problems add to the pressures of management in their planning for survival.

No doubt, these problems are now influencing, to a considerable extent, some of the current trends in the industry. After experiencing periods of excess capacity and saturated market, the oil companies have directed efforts to develop new outlets or new products. Some U.S. operators have taken advantage of certain tax benefits in minor diversification skirmishes. Others, operating in underdeveloped countries, have been motivated by the deep desire to encourage needed basic industries as a partner in the development and economic stabilization of the country involved.

Of course, there are also the conventional business desires for merger and diversification to achieve an evening-out of the extreme fluctuations of traditional business, for better use of unused research, engineering, production and marketing skills, or to capitalize on certain operating advantages.

While most activities on the part of the oil companies may be considered as directed toward vertical integration, the point is that the oil companies who have been investigating raw materials throughout their history are now playing around the fringes of the mining industry fields—fossil fuels—and even metals.

There are many reasons why mining offers a natural attraction for oil companies. The necessary qualifications, technical talents, and managerial skills available in the oil industry and applicable in mining are as follows:

1. Exploration staff—wide experience.
2. Broad experience in natural resource developments and financing.