

NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES NATIONAL ACADEMY OF ENGINEERING

2101 CONSTITUTION AVENUE WASHINGTON, D.C. 20418

COMMITTEE ON THE ALASKA EARTHQUAKE
OF THE DIVISION OF EARTH SCIENCES

TELEPHONE (202) 961-1508

February 18, 1969

Mr. Dwight Ink
Dept. of Housing and Urban Development
Room 10110
451 - 7th St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20410

Dear Mr. Ink:

You have no doubt wondered why there has been such an extensive delay in the publication of the Human Ecology of the Alaska Earthquake. I, too, have been less than happy about the speed of our effort. The enclosed statement by William Petrie, Executive Secretary, Committee on the Alaska Earthquake is a summary of the events that have been involved in the delay.

All of the manuscripts have been edited one additional time and, I hope, improved further. Would you kindly review carefully the enclosed copy of your article(s), indicate changes (I hope only minor ones) which you feel must be made and return the manuscript(s) to me within two weeks. If the article is acceptable to you in its present form please notify me by using the enclosed postal card.

As soon as we have obtained final approval from all authors the Panel will take a final look at the entire volume, and then push for rapid publication. You will receive galley proofs just as soon as they are ready. I anticipate publication sometime during the late summer of 1969.

Cordially,

Gene Haas

J. Eugene Haas
Chairman
Panel on Geography

WLP/jg

Enc.

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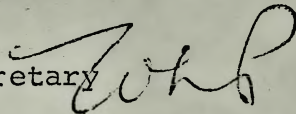
MEMORANDUM

COMMITTEE ON THE ALASKA EARTHQUAKE
OF THE DIVISION OF EARTH SCIENCES

TELEPHONE (202) 961-1508

February 18, 1969

TO: Authors, Human Ecology Volume

FROM: William L. Petrie, Executive Secretary 

SUBJECT: Major Revisions on the Human Ecology Volume

In June 1968, the Panel on Geography's Human Ecology Volume received surprisingly strong negative comments from reviewers for the Division of Earth Sciences (DES), and the Committee on Science and Public Policy (COSPUP), and these included reviews by several social scientists. As a result, the Volume was regarded as unpublishable by the Academy. The major objections centered around excessive wordiness, trivia, and repetition. As you may know, COSPUP reviews NAS publications involving science and public policy, particularly those prepared in response to a request by the Director of the Office of Science and Technology.

Since the June 15 COSPUP meeting, when the enormity of our problem with this volume became apparent, a number of staff discussions and meetings on the best method of salvaging it for the Committee's series on The Great Alaska Earthquake of 1964 led to its reorganization, rearrangement, reediting, and cutting down by our staff editors. As each paper was condensed, it was sent to the Panel Chairman, Dr. J. Eugene Haas, for review and comment. In addition, there have been other critical reviews by Committee and Division members, and by prominent social scientists for the Division, before the volume was resubmitted to COSPUP and the NAS Publications Editor, for approval in early February 1969.

In the process, several good things have emerged. The volume is a better, more readable, and useful product and several mistakes have been identified that certainly should be avoided in the future:

1. Our editorial policy and critical reviews were not rigid enough to produce tightly edited manuscripts. They have been improved.
2. The Panel should have been more critical and reviewed the Volume as a whole before it was sent to the DES and COSPUP.

3. Panels and authors may tend to assume too soon that their job on a report is done, when it is not really complete until the publication is virtually in print.

4. A Committee member, or at least a Panel member, should have been present at the COSPUP meeting to help defend the Volume, and the policies that led to it.

Leaving this to a Staff member is inherently unsatisfactory.

As with any reputable publisher interested in retaining its hard-won image, the Academy has to be careful about what is published under its auspices, and this is particularly true when the material can be construed as advice to the government, which is the situation with the CAE series. At the same time, the integrity of the Committee, Panel, and the individual authors must be respected and retained. Although these principles may appear to be so contradictory that there is no remaining middle ground through which a manuscript may pass toward publication, we have to assume that this is really not the case.

Following the February 15, 1969 meeting of COSPUP, we received permission to publish the volume. Now we need your approval of our reediting by March 1, to avoid further delays. In any case, please sign and return the enclosed card as soon as possible, to:

Dr. J. Eugene Haas
Department of Sociology
University of Colorado
Boulder, Colorado 80302

Papers are identified by number in upper left hand corner and by short title. On some papers, questions are asked in the margins; please answer them as soon as you can. If we can avoid further unexpected delay, galley proofs may be available by July. Reprint information will be furnished later.

May we continue to have your understanding support?

WLP/jg

cc: Committee Chairman Krauskopf
Panel Chairman Haas

Enc.