

The Editor,
The Journal of Glaciology

SIR,

I am glad to respond to your recent request for my comment on the usefulness of the term "glacierization."

I think we all realize that technical terms become established through use rather than by fiat, and that they survive ultimately through successful competition based on their inherent merits. The word "glacierization" is going through the pragmatic test: those who find it useful will employ it; those who do not need it will avoid it in the interest of simplification.

I believe that geologic science is best served by a technical vocabulary that is lean and spare, and yet explicit. This belief is, I think, reflected in my book *Glacial Geology*, which embodies a conscious effort to use plain English to the maximum possible extent. A footnote on page 64 of that book states why the term "glacierization" seems unnecessary. That statement represents, I believe, the opinion of most American glacial geologists, who have found little difficulty in expressing their meaning through the use of the verbs "glaciate" and "deglaciate," and the adjectival form "glacier-covered."

Word evolution, like organic evolution, is a slow process. I suggest that we allow this word to continue in competition (unlike its organic counterparts) through use and disuse, toward survival or extinction. I assure its proponents that if the need for it becomes widely established, I shall be among those who will adopt it.

*Department of Geology,
Yale University,
New Haven, Conn., U.S.A.
29 November 1954*

RICHARD FOSTER FLINT

SIR,

With regard to "glacierization," referred to in the *Journal of Glaciology*, I am still strongly in favour of the retention of this word, and I do not at all agree with Flint that it "seems unnecessary," or that "glacier-covered" is more desirable. There are so many usages where precision in the significance of "glaciation" and "glacierisation" (my preferred spelling, co-incident with that of Wright and Priestley!) is highly important, and a case has only lately cropped up in an examination paper here, where the effects of ice-cover (glaciation) were confused with that of the broader aspects of ice-inundation (without erosive effects). The effect of Flint's suggestion will only be a tendency towards confused thinking and description, and an all-too-loose general usage of the term "glaciation."

*Department of Geology,
University of Otago,
Dunedin, N.Z.
22 November 1954*

NOEL E. ODELL

SIR,

The need for distinct and agreed terms to denote the different meanings which you advocate for "glacierization" and "glaciation" is increasing all the time. Indeed, this distinction may be regarded as essential for accurate topographical description of very large areas; especially in the polar regions. The Scott Polar Research Institute has for many years endeavoured to foster the strict use of these two terms, but we also have to admit that the distinction has not caught on as had been hoped. On behalf therefore of the Scott Polar Research Institute I write to give our support to the suggestions made in the recent editorial note in the *Journal of Glaciology* (Vol. 2, No. 16, 1954, p. 378), that "ice-covered" or "glacier-covered" should be used by those who do not like "glacierized."

The distinction between ice-covered and formerly ice-covered land must be kept clear, particularly in titles and chapter headings that stand out of context. It is therefore very desirable that the term "glaciated" be used only for a land surface that has undergone modification, protection, etc., by an ice-cover. There is no objection to saying, for example, that the rock floor under an existing valley glacier is being "glaciated." It seems more important to agree that "glaciated" does not mean covered with ice at the present time than to press for the adoption of any particular term meaning ice-covered.

*Scott Polar Research Institute,
Cambridge
16 November 1954*

BRIAN ROBERTS