

Anonymous.  
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THE COAST SURVEY INQUIRY.

SUMMARY DISMISSAL OF  
SUPT. HILGARD RECOMMENDED.

The Report of the Commission is Submitted to the Secretary and Substantiates the Charges of a Rotten Bureau.

Secretary Manning yesterday received the report of the commission recently appointed by him to investigate the management of the finances of the Coast Survey Bureau. It is a voluminous document and gives very full details of the transactions which have been so much questioned. All the charges made by First Auditor Chenoweth are sustained, and the commission recommend the summary dismissal of Prof. Hilgard and the other officials recently suspended. The commission concluded its labors early yesterday afternoon, and before signing their report had Prof. Hilgard before them. He acknowledged that the affairs of the bureau had been loosely conducted and claimed that the only fault that could be found with him was that he had not properly supervised matters. In order that proceedings might be stopped he requested permission to resign, preferring this course to being ejected from his office in disgrace. This, he was informed by the commission, was a matter over which they had no control, and their duty was to submit the testimony to the Secretary of the Treasury for such action as he might deem proper.

In connection with the investigation, First Auditor Chenoweth received a report from Assistant Superintendent B. A. Colonna, temporarily in charge of the Coast Survey Bureau. Mr. Colonna reviews the charges against the suspended officials at length, and then proceeds to give his personal experience since he entered the bureau fifteen years ago. His language regarding Prof. Hilgard is as follows:

That the Professor has proved a failure as superintendent of the Coast and Geodetic Survey I do not hesitate to declare. He is dilatory and vacillating and addicted to drink or some other habit which at times much impairs his fitness for duty. I believe him to be honest, but a much misguided man, following customs that have been so long unquestioned that they had become looked upon as laws, and that, to a very great extent, he alone is responsible for the humiliating condition to which the service is now brought. It should be borne in mind, however, that this condition of affairs is no new thing. When I entered the survey fifteen years ago it

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was about the same, and, notwithstanding the careless manner in which the operations pertaining to the business transactions of the survey, not of a professional nature, have been carried on, I cannot point out an instance in which public funds have been deliberately transferred to private use.

A desperate effort has been made to save the accused the mortification of a summary dismissal, and it is expected that strong influence will be brought to bear upon Secretary Manning by their friends.

First Auditor Chenoweth said yesterday that the testimony adduced before the commission established the most culpable neglect and prostitution of a public trust in the interest of a ring of so-called scientists. Every charge that he had made had been substantiated by the most positive testimony and was wrung from persons who desired to screen Hilgard and his associates. No attention seemed to have been paid to giving the Government an equivalent for its money, but private enterprises were fostered and Government employes were detailed for the advancement of private individuals.