

permanence should be given the project before its formal undertaking.

JOHN M. CLARKE,
HENRY S. GRAVES,
BARRINGTON MOORE,
Committee on Program

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SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

THE INCREASING USE OF UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY MAPS

THE project of covering the 3,000,000 square miles of the United States with accurate topographic surveys was definitely adopted by the federal government in 1882. The project was large, and the work is even now less than half completed. The standards of accuracy and refinement in topographic surveying have been constantly raised by the topographic engineers of the United States Geological Survey, Department of the Interior, with the view of meeting adequately every use to which the maps can be put. The law provides for the sale of the maps made by the Geological Survey at the cost of printing, a charge that must be considered merely nominal when it is realized that the cost of an edition of a printed map may be only a small percentage of the cost of surveying the area it represents.

The government itself is making a large and increasing use of these topographic maps, but the expenditure of public funds for these surveys is otherwise fully warranted only as the public uses the maps. To promote this use, the Geological Survey has recently given more attention to the wider distribution of the maps.

The distribution of a government map depends largely upon publicity, though the necessity of adopting commercial business methods in handling orders for the maps when a demand is created must not be overlooked. To inform the public of the existence of authoritative maps published by the federal government a special effort is now being made to reach the communities in every area that is covered by a map, and to this end every map as issued is brought to the attention of the local and state press.

Other methods of promoting wider distribu-

tion involve the cooperation of boy-scout masters, schoolboys, and hotel managers, as well as of a large number of bookstores as local agents. Helpful publicity has also been gained through the voluntary cooperation of the press. The printing in a single publication of a brief statement regarding the Geological Survey's maps often results in orders for a hundred or more maps and many inquiries for the State index maps, which are sent free, showing the areas already mapped.

The periods of maximum demand for these government maps are the beginning of the vacation period and the beginning of the school year.

THE ROYAL SOCIETY CONVERSAZIONE¹

THE annual conversazione of the Royal Society was held at Burlington House on May 11, and was so well attended that it was practically impossible to see a tenth part of the exhibits and demonstrations. Fortunately arrangements are always made for an earlier press view of the latter. This year amongst the thirty-nine demonstrations figuring in the catalogue there was none having any direct bearing on medical science, though the exhibition contained much of great general interest. Mr. L. T. Hogben, of the Imperial College of Science, demonstrated the effects on tadpoles of feeding them with pineal gland. Hitherto there has been no proof of any physiological function exercised by the pineal body, but Mr. Hogben has succeeded in showing, in tadpoles at least, that it has some controlling power over the pigment cells. Macroscopic and microscopic preparations showed that in the pineal-fed tadpoles there is a very evident contraction of the melanophores, an effect that is not produced by feeding experiments with any other endocrine organ. Mr. C. Tate Regan, F.R.S., gave a demonstration of part of the life-history of the common eel, founded on the researches of Dr. J. Schmidt, who showed that the freshwater eel of Europe breeds in the Atlantic, southeast of Bermuda. A series of larvæ, from the middle and western North Atlantic, with long and slender pointed

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