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THE STUDY OF EARTH MOVEMENTS IN CALIFORNIA[1]

IT has been the custom for a number of years for the retiring president to present in brief review a field of activity with which he has been associated rather than to undertake the detailed exploitation of any particular problem. I have therefore chosen to give some outline of an effort which has been in progress for four or five years only, but which is particularly appropriate to present in this time and place because there are so many in Washington who have been associated with it.

The present study of earth movements in California is planned to be of broader scope than a mere statistical study of earthquakes. It is intended to do somewhat more than record tremors with the seismograph, in order, by comparison with other similar records, to trace the path of the waves to a common center of disturbance, and so to obtain information about the manner of their transmission through the interior of the earth. This is a part of the project as heretofore, but we have wished to investigate not only the tremors which may be picked up here or there and their path traced to a distant point of origin, but their probable causes, the earth movements at the source, cumulative mass movements through which the enormous strains are set up and not alone the disturbances which indicate their release.

The particular project, out of which the present undertaking grew, started with Mr. Harry O. Wood, known to many of you as acting secretary of the Geophysical Union, following the war period; before that as the assistant in charge of the Seismological Station at the Kilauea Observatory, where he successfully recorded and analyzed local shocks of volcanic origin; before that as an assistant to Professor Lawson, at the University of California, and one of the collaborators in the preparation of the great monograph on the San Francisco earthquake of 1906. Guided by this experience, Wood prepared and published in the *Bulletin* of the Seismological Society a very elaborate project for the study of cumulative stresses and local earth movements in California on an extensive scale. Some of you may have read the scheme which he offered. It contemplated stations at intervals of 50 miles throughout the West Coast region and continuous observations over a period of years. Altogether, it was rather too extensive a project for any available agency and so after

[1] Address of the president of the Washington Academy of Sciences, January 13, 1925.