

# SCIENCE

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## THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

### SCIENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT<sup>1</sup>

OUR civilization is being made over right before our eyes under the stimulation of the forces set loose by discovery, research and invention. This new physical world has a firm basis upon undeviating universal laws. It is probably true that we have available a mere fragment of the great structure of knowledge which will eventually be brought into the service of man. Our view-points are rapidly changing. Old assumptions, theories and dogmas are being rapidly pushed out of our minds. In this period of mental ferment, shams have been exposed, the taboos of centuries released, and much has been brought up for discussion which was considered settled by our forefathers.

In the field of government there has been a rapid increase of democracy. To an increasing degree, science has become definitely associated with the development and functions of government. This is the age of democracy and science. Science has no sympathy with substitutes for the truth. Science is giving the human family a unique and unexampled service, and through it the human mind has been vastly increased in its range and mental power.

With the development of the democratic idea and the elimination to a large degree of the divine right of rulers, the necessity of wise leadership selected by democratic processes becomes a paramount need. This is the day of the expert. The man who knows must be recognized and used. In the fields of science the experts can be trained and developed, but such experts require opportunity for long years of study and they need constant exposure to those who are devoting their lives to research; in fact, progress in our modern civilization is going to depend upon the experimental method rather than upon catchwords, aphorisms or the persistent broadcasting of untried ideas. So close to-day is the link between science and its laboratories and the government that we can measure the progress of a civilization by its economic capacity to support laboratories and by the quality of the intellects brought into them.

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<sup>1</sup> Address delivered in Washington on March 21, 1929, upon the occasion of the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the U. S. Geological Survey.

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