

Our thanks are due to our former colleague, Russell E. Marker, now in Mexico, for the methods used.

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UNUSUAL MORTALITY AMONG GEOLOGISTS

DURING the slightly over five months ending April 19 no less than sixteen fellows of the Geological Society of America have died. Only twice in the entire fifty years of the society's history has the entire annual loss of its personnel been as heavy as in this five-month period. Never has the distinction of the deceased fellows been so outstanding. The list follows:

	Date of death	Age
	1943	
Frank Leverett	November 15	84
H. L. Fairchild	" 29	94
	1944	
G. O. Smith	January 10	73
E. B. Mathews	February 4	74
Arthur Keith	" 7	79
F. G. Clapp	" 18	65
E. O. Ulrich	" 22	86
Douglas Johnson	" 24	66
R. E. Dickerson	" 24	66
J. A. Taff	March 8	81
H. A. Buehler	" 14	68
B. L. Miller	" 23	69
H. L. Smyth	April 3	81
H. N. Eaton	" 12	64
F. C. Schrader	" 16	83
R. C. Wells	" 19	66
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Average		74.5

This list includes our foremost glacial geologist (Leverett); three former presidents of the Geological Society of America (Fairchild, Keith and Johnson); a former director of the U. S. Geological Survey (Smith); a Penrose Medallist (Ulrich); four members of the National Academy of Sciences (Leverett, Keith, Ulrich and Johnson) and two of the American Philosophical Society (Leverett and Johnson).

Three other geologists not fellows of the society died within the same period. They were George Steiger, who died on April 18 at the age of 74, R. C. Wells, who died on April 19 at the age of 66, and F. B. Hanley, who died on April 24 at the age of 45.

Can these losses, notwithstanding the ripe age of the men, be regarded as war casualties? Some we know have been called back into strenuous active service, and all have probably suffered disillusionment by reason of the world catastrophe with its destruction of cultural institutions and values, to which their lives have been devoted. Few have been without close friends or relatives in supreme danger on the fighting fronts.

WM. H. HOBBS

THE PAPER SHORTAGE AND SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATION

WARTIME limitations of paper are making serious difficulties for our scientific periodicals, and the paper shortage is more likely to increase than to diminish.

Three adjustments are possible: (1) Scientific journals might be officially recognized as of greater value than, say, newspapers, and so obtain higher priorities; (2) there could be a drastic curtailment of publication; (3) better printing, editing and other means could secure publication of substantially the present material in less space.

Doubtless scientific publications are more valuable than much of the stuff that is printed in the popular newspapers and magazines. But it is altogether unlikely that scientific journals could compete with popular magazines in bringing pressure on allocating authorities.

Drastic curtailment in the publication of scientific results would be a calamity to the nation. As a matter of fact, the paper shortage merely brings to a head a crisis in scientific publication which has been long developing, and it is high time that it be given careful consideration. The effectiveness of scientific investigation is menaced by increasing difficulty and delay in publication. Prior to this present squeeze in paper the chief difficulty has been due to rising costs which compelled restriction of output with consequent congestion until papers often become almost obsolete before publication. Nothing is more important to the advance of science than the prompt interchange of results. This has been accomplished by printing, but present conditions have fostered other and quicker modes of diffusion. These should be stepped up in frequency and in effectiveness.

The easiest method for prompt dissemination of results is by the exchange of manuscripts within the small circle of workers known to be actively concerned. This gives insiders a great advantage. During the war when much is secret, outsiders have little chance of making useful contributions. No one doubts the necessity for secrecy in war research, but science advances mostly through the stimulation of mind on mind. The chief function of technical societies is to keep their members abreast of progress, and desire to keep up with developments is the principal motive for maintaining membership. In elementary self-interest, therefore, a technical society ought to be alert for every means of increasing its usefulness to its members.

Some societies distribute advance abstracts of the papers offered at their annual meetings. Not infrequently these appear more than a year before the papers themselves are printed. Authors and program makers should take great pains to improve abstracts.