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GEOL OGY IN NATIONAL AND EVERYDAY LIFE1

By Dr. GEORGE R. MANSFIELD
U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

INTRODUCTION

To a surprisingly large number of people the word geology suggests nothing definite or practical, nothing associated with national or everyday life. Nevertheless, geology is concerned with the materials man uses in building his houses and great industrial plants. It deals with the metals of which his car is composed and with the fuels with which he drives his car or heats his house. It has to do with the seasoning and preservation of his food, with the water he drinks and with the scenery which greets his eyes every morning. It considers the destructive hazards that form part of his environment in many parts of the world, such as floods, earthquakes and volcanic activity, and is concerned as well with the gentler moods of nature that calm his spirit and inspire his imagination.

Minerals enter into all phases of our modern civilization. Geology deals with the occurrence and distribution of minerals and with the laws and forces that tend to create or destroy them. Industry must know where suitable supplies of minerals for its needs may be obtained and what conditions are imposed by nature on their successful recovery and exploitation. Federal, state and local governments must know whether

1 Address of the retiring vice-president and chairman of the Section on Geology, American Association for the Advancement of Science, Indianapolis, December 31, 1937. Published by permission of the Director, Geological Survey.