THE AMERICAN GEOPHYSICAL UNION

By Dr. J. A. FLEMING

The American Geophysical Union has to do with those theoretical or applied sciences relating to the earth, its configuration, its structure and the natural forces in operation upon or within it. Since inception in 1919, the Union has gradually developed so that now, with 1,900 members, it is perhaps the principal organization in the United States of America, acting as a clearing house for new thoughts and ideas relating to geophysics.

Sponsored by the National Academy of Sciences through the National Research Council, the executive committee of the Union is the committee on geophysics of the council and is the American committee of the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics. The functions of the union are "to promote the study of problems concerned with the figure and physics of the earth, to initiate and coordinate researches which depend upon international and national cooperation, and to provide for their scientific discussion and publication."

The wide-spread special interests of the eight sections of the union are expressed in the papers presented at the annual meetings, in the regional meetings (often held in cooperation with other scientific organizations) and in the annual "Transactions." Symposia on timely subjects are annual features of the general assemblies.

The fields of the sections of the union are briefly as follows:

(a) Geodesy: This section is devoted to large-scale surveying on the earth's surface, dealing particularly with triangulation, leveling and gravimetric surveys. Its objectives are principally determining the shape and size of the earth and adequate mapping of the earth's surface. Borderline subjects are earth-tides and variations of latitude.