

FOREWORD

By Professor H. W:SON AHLMANN

WITH this issue of the *Journal of Glaciology* the British Glaciological Society opens its post-war activities. To this publication we tie all those hopes of successful work in the service of science that are combined with peace and progress after the devastation of the war.

The British Glaciological Society under its leader, Mr. G. Seligman, has already contributed to the development of our knowledge of snow, ice and glaciers with successful researches. I need here only refer to the significant investigations on the Jungfrauoch in 1937 and 1938. We have consequently every reason to expect that in the future the Society will also successfully accomplish its programme.

As science becomes more and more specialized each branch comes to depend more and more on collaboration with others. In order to promote such collaboration and also to stimulate the interest in specialized research, a Society is required. The British Glaciological Society is the only Society in the world which safeguards our knowledge of snow, ice and glaciers and its existence is therefore a great satisfaction to all who realize the necessity for increased knowledge of these subjects. It is also necessary that such a Society should be able to publish in a specific organ the results of the studies of its members and give reviews of those of others. We welcome this first issue of the *Journal of Glaciology* with gratitude and hope that this serial publication will in future continue in the form most suitable for its aims.

It is well known that the more we learn the more remains to be discovered. As a science glaciology is young, even though snow, ice and glaciers have been noticed for centuries, and scattered contributions to a knowledge of them have been made, but they have been remarkably late in becoming the subject of systematic investigation. And this in spite of the fact that snow and ice are of great practical importance in northern countries. If we date the beginning of modern Arctic research back to the middle of last century, five decades passed before the drift ice and the glaciers, covering the main part of the area, were more generally noticed by science. In the Antarctic it is only of late years that we have received some isolated information about the structure and physical properties of its ice cover. We are as yet only on the threshold of the world of ice in the Antarctic that conceals the answer to questions of the greatest importance to the understanding of physical-geographical conditions both at the present time and during the Ice Age.

The glaciers at all latitudes round the earth are of no less interest. As yet we know very little about the meteorological reasons for their existence and variations in size, about their structure, movement and other features. Before these questions are satisfactorily settled, the glaciers cannot be utilized as the climatographical registrars they really are. The glaciers and their variations in size provide the only, or at least the most reliable, evidence of the history of climate. About their morphological activity many speculations have been made and more indeed has been written than is justified while we know so little about the glaciers themselves and their mechanical and dynamic actions.

The tasks confronting us are immense and various and only two have been mentioned here. To serve its aims glaciology must in future be founded in the first place on physics, mechanics, crystallography and meteorology and must belong to the complex of sciences that in certain countries go by the name of geophysics.

It is my confident expectation that the British Glaciological Society will promote this development in a successful manner and with its publications will further liaison and collaboration, not only among British scientists but between those of other countries, an essential prerequisite in the successful pursuit of any branch of science.

“THE JOURNAL OF GLACIOLOGY”

DURING 1939 three numbers of the journal of the then “Association for the Study of Snow and Ice” were issued in roneographed form with the title *Papers and Discussions*. Since then the position has changed. The *Zeitschrift für Gletscherkunde* ceased publication in the early years of the war, whether temporarily or not is not known since it has not been possible to make contact with its former editor. Yet the demand for an international journal devoted entirely to glaciology has become greater than ever. In the absence of such a journal the hope was expressed in this country, in the United States and on the Continent that this Society should take the initiative in bringing one into being. Therefore after much thought and discussion, the Committee has decided upon the rather more ambitious publication of which this is the first number. It is intended to start in a modest and restricted way, and if the journal finds favour and is able to attract suitable contributions from home and abroad it will be increased in size.

Finance may prove to be a limiting factor, but if a sufficiently high standard of subject matter is maintained, there should be no great difficulty on this score. In this connection grateful acknowledgement is made here to the receipt of a “Scientific Publications Grant-in-Aid” from the Royal Society which relieves the Committee from some financial anxiety for the moment.

The aim of this journal will be to report on the transactions, welfare and other domestic news of the British Glaciological Society and in addition to publish articles on all aspects of snow and ice research from the purely scientific to the essentially practical. As an example of the latter, notes on the avoidance of avalanches and the diversion of snow-drifts would be appropriate. Correspondence will be encouraged. Care must be taken not to overlap unnecessarily with other sciences. Nevertheless some overlapping seems unavoidable; for instance, the development of snowflakes in the atmosphere is a subject that might be claimed by meteorologists, yet an article on some theme of this kind would seem suitable for these pages. Again, no study of glaciers can be complete without taking into account glacial erosion and that branch of geomorphology cannot be excluded from glaciology. In the domain of geography, land and sea ice form a connecting link and could properly be dealt with here.

The Editorial Committee hopes that within these not too narrow boundaries contributions will be received both from this country and abroad. Stress is laid upon the breadth of the field which should be covered, because in recent years much of the work of British glaciologists has been devoted to glacier physics and, important as that is, it is desirable that the basis on which this journal is conducted should be much broader than this.