

# Earthquakes Report Themselves

*Seismology*

The destruction of Philippopolis in Bulgaria by the disastrous earthquake of April 18 was reported to scientists by the earthquake itself three days before the wrecked telegraphic service could be restored to bring the news to the outside world. Numerous seismograph observatories reported their data to Science Service as fast as the records could be deciphered. These were telephoned to the seismologists of the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, who combined them and plotted off the distances on the map. The lines intersected across the doomed city of Philippopolis. A Science Service news item reported the location of the epicenter at Philippopolis on April 19; on April 21 the first direct wires were received telling of the de-

struction of the city.

A similar long lead over the wires occurred only a few days before that, when on April 10 instrumental data located the epicenter of the earthquake that devastated eastern Peru, details of which did not appear in the wire news until April 17.

The seismograph stations cooperating in the reporting of data on these two quakes were those of the U. S. Bureau of Standards, Washington; the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, Chicago and Tuscon, Ariz.; the Dominion Observatory, Ottawa; the Meteorological Observatory, Victoria, B. C., and the stations of the Jesuit Seismological Association at Georgetown University, Washington; Fordham University, New York City; Loy-

ola University, New Orleans, and St. Louis University, St. Louis.

The longest lead ever obtained by an earthquake in making its own announcement occurred on May 23, 1927, when Science Service cooperated with government and non-official seismologists in reporting the great quake in Kansu Province, China, which killed over 100,000 persons. The first news to reach the world through ordinary channels came out during the latter part of July, when a missionary priest who had been in the region when the disaster occurred worked his way to the nearest telegraph station, hundreds of miles from the damaged area.

*Science News-Letter, May 5, 1928*

## The Depths of Space

*Astronomy*

It was only a few years ago that astronomers were unable to measure the distance of objects in the sky more than a hundred thousand or so light years away. But now at the Mt. Wilson Observatory they have photographed spiral nebulae at distances so great that our own system of stars—the galaxy—is of minute size in comparison. So remote are some of these that their light has been on the way to us since remote geological ages.

This has been done with the 100-inch telescope, the world's largest, which is depicted on our cover this week. Seated on the observing platform is Francis G. Pease, in charge of the Mt. Wilson Observatory's shops, and under whose supervision the great instrument was built. The concave mirror, 100 inches in diameter, that brings the light rays to a focus, was the work of Prof. George W. Ritchey, who has been working for several years at the Paris observatory to find the best way of making still larger telescopes.

At the time of the great Roman chariot races, swallows were brought from distant towns and at the end of the races were marked with the winning colors and set free to fly home.

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