

*The Oxford Atlas*: Edited by Brigadier Sir Clinton Lewis & Colonel J. D. Campbell with the Assistance of D. P. Bickmore and K. F. Cook. (London: *Oxford University Press* 1951).

The making of a new atlas is a colossal task involving so many stages of work that it cannot be undertaken lightly. Apart from the labour of compiling the wealth of information which has to be incorporated in it to make it as upto date as possible, the reproduction of each map in several colours is a very specialised process. The present Atlas comprises 120 pages of maps in six colours. Each of these colours has to be fair drawn separately on a non-distorting medium; these drawings are then photographed and the printer has quite a difficult job to ensure that there is perfect register when they are all superimposed to produce the final map.

The need for a new atlas becomes imperative after half a century or so during which time the political and natural boundaries are apt to change significantly and new townships spring into existence. Some new places relatively unimportant before loom into prominence and they have to be given their proper place on the atlas. As an example, Abadan is not shown at all in the previous atlases but is shown in prominent type on the Middle East sheet in the present one.

One important feature of the new Atlas is the use of certain special projections which have produced some new effects in

Cartography in recent years. A globe is an inconvenient thing to handle from several points of view. One cannot see much more than half of it at one time and distances are not too easy to scale on it. A good atlas has to give a good rendering of a large portion of the spherical world on flat maps. The problem of showing the entire surface of the globe on a single sheet is intractable, but some modern projections go a long way towards solving it. One such projection is the oblique Mercator, which has been used in sheet 82-83 to represent North and South America on the scale of 1/16M in the same sheet. It is so designed that the maximum scale errors at the extremities of the map do not exceed 7%.

Equal area projections have been used in the Political World Map (No. 17), so that the whole world presents itself to the eye in proper perspective. In each map on the Atlas mention is made of the projection used and tables are provided to enable the user to calculate the scale error at any point of the map.

The Oxford Atlas took five years to complete by a team of workers. Its production is of a high standard as one expects from the Oxford University Press. It is moderately priced to be within the reach of students for whom it is primarily intended. But this comprehensive and well arranged Atlas should be no less useful to a layman as a guide and work of reference.

B. L. G.