

ANNOUNCEMENT

THE ORDNANCE SURVEY 2½-INCH MAP

Amongst the recommendations of the Departmental Committee set up in 1935 under the chairmanship of the Rt. Hon. the Viscount Davidson to review the styles and scales, and the bringing up to date, of Ordnance Survey maps, was the initiation of an entirely new map series at the scale of 1/25,000 or about 2½ inches to 1 mile. Some 500 sheets of this map, about one-fifth of the projected total, are now published, and it is hoped that the series will be complete in about three years hence. In the areas already covered there are signs of the increasing popularity of this map.

The decision to introduce the map was based upon a considerable weight of evidence that there was too wide a gap between the 1-inch and 6-inch series. It was believed that, in particular, schools and walkers would appreciate its value, but, in addition, the scale is of course very well suited to many technical and administrative uses. This was manifest during the war. The War Office series at this scale, based on the now obsolescent War Office Cassini grid, and somewhat illegible by reason of its straight photographic reduction from the 6-inch Ordnance Survey map, was widely used by local authorities.

The new Provisional Edition of the 2½-inch map which the Ordnance Survey is producing on National Grid sheet lines is a very different affair. "Provisional" means that it is based on the old 6-inch maps to which certain revision material, collected for A.R.P. war-time purposes, has been added; on the other hand the final edition will be based on the 50-inch resurvey of built-up areas, now in hand in many towns, on the stringent overhaul of the 25-inch plans in rural areas and on surveyed contours. The 2½-inch Provisional sheets are all newly drawn, with conventional signs, symbols, etc., specially designed to suit the scales; the result is an extremely clear and pleasing map.

The sheets are squares whose sides lie along the 10 kilometre grid lines of the National Grid, and each sheet is known by the 10 km. grid reference of its S.W. corner. The sheet lines are, in fact, represented by the solid grid lines at 10 km. intervals to be found on the face of all modern 1-inch Ordnance Survey maps and by the only grid lines to be shown on the ¼-inch, and on the 10-mile (1/625,000) maps sponsored by the Ministry of Town and Country Planning. These smaller scale maps are therefore in themselves index diagrams for the new map; the old system used for indexing 6-inch maps county by county does not apply to it.

The 2½-inch map is obtainable in three styles, the fully coloured, the outline, and the administrative areas. In the first the black detail is confined to the outlines of roads and buildings, railways, lettering

and certain conventional signs. - Public buildings are also shown in solid black, but all other buildings have a grey filling. Enclosure boundaries, orchard and wood symbols are also shown in grey, which has the effect of merging the less important map features into the background and thus enabling the more important ones to stand out. (Note, however, that the grey features do not occur in certain Lancashire, Cheshire, Cumberland, Westmorland, and East Anglian sheets.) Water and marsh are in blue, and road fillings, contours (at 25 ft. intervals), and sand are in brown.

The Outline Edition is in grey monochrome, an exact replica of the coloured edition except that the features depicted in brown have been omitted. It is printed on specially heavy paper suitable for use in drawing offices. The Administrative Areas Edition consists of the outline edition with a red overprint naming and defining all classes of administrative boundaries down to parishes and wards. It is understood that the Local Government Boundary Commission intend to illustrate their report using the Administrative Areas Edition of the 2½-inch map. The sales of the Administrative Areas Edition covering rural areas have hitherto been small and it may be necessary shortly to consider whether the production of these sheets is justifiable or not.

It is indeed likely that as the series covers more and more of the country it will be found to oust the 6-inch map wherever minor features of topographical detail are required in a compact form. At the moment the following areas are in course of being covered : Greater London ; Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee, and Aberdeen ; Plymouth and Dartmoor ; Purbeck, the New Forest, Southampton, and Portsmouth ; the South Coast from Littlehampton to Ramsgate ; South Wales and Bristol ; Gloucester, Oxford, Cambridge, Reading, and Luton ; East Anglia and the Broads ; Birmingham and the Black Country ; Tyneside ; and, perhaps most completely as yet, Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Cheshire. The Director-General of the Ordnance Survey at Chessington, Surrey, is open to inquiry at all times about what sheets are available in the various styles and which sheets are imminent. The maps themselves are, of course, obtainable, like all maps issued by the Department, from booksellers and map agents.