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ON CONTENTS AND FORM OF GAZETTEERS*

Paper presented by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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ON CONTENTS AND FORM OF GAZETTEERS

1. The gazetteers published by official agencies of a country serve a double way: being reference publications they at the same time are the most effective means of introduction into everyday usage of home and foreign geographical names, normalized in the language (languages) of the country concerned. That is why publication of gazetteers is a pledge of successful work on the standardization of geographical names on national and subsequently on international level.

2. The work on compilation of gazetteers has considerably broadened in the USSR in recent years. At search for the most convenient variant for practical application several types of gazetteers were elaborated, each of them designed for a specific circle of consumers.

3. First of all it is necessary to distinguish between two main kinds of gazetteers: those containing home geographical names and those containing geographical names of other countries. The gazetteers of the first type presenting the code of domestic geographical names are approved by the corresponding State bodies and become official documents to be used not only within this country but also abroad. The gazetteers of the second type presenting the normalized in the language of the given country geographical names of other countries may have the official status only within the country-publisher.

4. Modern gazetteers differ in territory coverage, volume, contents and form.

T e r r i t o r y c o v e r a g e : the national gazetteers published in the USSR cover both the whole territory of the country and, taking into consideration the size of the country, individual political-administrative units: Republics, territories or regions. Gazetteers presenting names of other countries are compiled either on the whole world or on a group of countries united by common character of language or by their position, as well as on separate countries.

V o l u m e (number of entries): There is a wide range of gazetteers from comparatively small publications incorporating only the names of large and important entities to maximum full ones. The gazetteers of this kind are usually compiled on the basis of a census data (for selection of populated places) and on data of a base map (for selection of topographic features).

C o n t e n t s : the compulsory content elements of any Soviet gazetteer are: the normalized Russian and national (for non-Russian) forms of names, designation of the kind of the feature which the name relates to and its connection to a