

AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCE



NC 35/67

National Committee for the IBP

A meeting of the Committee was held at 10.00 a.m. on 17 May 1967 in the Council Room of the Academy.

Present: Sir Otto Frankel (Chairman)
Dr. S. V. Boyden Professor W. V. Macfarlane
Professor C. M. Donald Professor R. L. Specht
Dr. K. W. Finlay Professor R. J. Walsh
Dr. G. F. Humphrey

Dr. R. O. Slatyer was present by invitation and Mr. R. A. Perry attended from 3.30 p.m.

Apologies for absence were received from Professor J. D. Ovington and Dr. D. F. Waterhouse.

The Executive Secretary and Assistant Secretary were in attendance.

1 Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting (Paper NC 29/66) were confirmed, subject to the following amendments:-

Item 2, paragraph 3, line 8:- "Division of Land Research" deleted
and line 11:- "Plant Research" altered to "CSIRO Divisions of Plant Industry, Land Research and Wild Life Research".

Item 5, line 3:- "Flow of Nutrients" altered to "Forestry"
line 4:- "Assimilation" altered to "Transformation"
line 10:- The word "Cereals" preceded by the letters "PT".

2 Reports on International Activities

Sir Otto Frankel reported on the latest meeting of SCIBP, and the UNESCO proposal for a Biosphere conference in 1968 to be jointly sponsored by the UN, FAO and WHO, and with IBP and IUCN participation. This would draw heavily on information flowing in through IBP channels, and at the same time might conceivably be expected to give impetus to phase 2 of the IBP.

Having considered the proposal, the National Committee resolved to give its general support.

3 Report on Australian Activities

Section PCT. Professor Specht distributed copies of a detailed progress report embracing the activities of the PCT working groups.

For the sake of clarity it was decided that the abbreviation PCT be dropped in favour of the international abbreviations, PT, PP, and CT.

The proposal of working group PT Decomposers that an international "humic acid bank" ought to be set up was endorsed as a desirable project; and so also was the proposal for a "bank" to supply plant materials fully labelled with C14 for studying decomposition of whole plant materials, or constituents from them such as lignin, pectin, cellulose, nucleic acids and proteins'.

The possibility of Dr. Millington resigning as Convener of the PT Nitrogen Fixation group was mentioned and it was agreed that should this happen, Dr. Greenland be invited to accept the position.

Mr. Perry reported on the CSIRO "Range Land Research Programme in Australia" which to some extent would fill the role which had been envisioned by the PCT committee for its Arid Zone proposals. While the IBP could claim only indirect influence in originating the scheme, it was intended in carrying it out to co-operate wherever possible with Australian IBP plans.

Section PFM. Dr. Humphrey reported some variations to the provisional programme. An additional freshwater project would be undertaken, project No.3 (p.42) has been deleted and No.4 would probably be deleted. Project No.5 had been completed and all others will proceed, but with some modification in concept.

There was the possibility of a symposium being held in 1969 to bring together the results of the Indian Ocean Survey. India and Australia had been suggested as possible venues but Dr. Humphrey was opposed to both on the grounds of cost. He suggested that Japan or Singapore would be preferable alternatives.

Section HA. Professor Walsh reported on recent developments in the HA programme (see attached notes).

Section UM. Dr. Finlay made a verbal report and mentioned in particular "Plant Gene Pools" and the "Biology of Adaptation" programmes. Adequate finance had been provided by SCIBP for the current year, but for the development of the programme it was hoped to obtain assistance from the Rockefeller Foundation, in addition to continued support from SCIBP.

Public Relations. Dr. Boyden reported on two recent meetings of the sub-committee. Two recommendations for publicising the IBP had been put forward for consideration by the National Committee. One was to hold a large representative conference of IBP workers to launch phase 2 of the programme. After considerable discussion as to how this might effectively be organised, it was decided that the expense involved would be too high. An alternative proposal was suggested to hold an evening function for selected guests which the Minister for Education and Science would be invited to open. This could be followed the next day by a symposium, and Dr. Boyden agreed to convene a small sub-committee to organise the details. Suggestions for the programme were an address by the President on the general theme of man and his environment; a talk on the IBP by Sir Otto Frankel, and if time permitted, brief accounts of the work being done in his group by each of the section conveners.

The possibility of engaging a public relations firm to publicise the activities, would be investigated.

To finance the operation, it was proposed to draw on the annual IBP budget of \$2,000, and a submission to this effect would be placed before Council.

The other recommendation of the sub-committee was the publication of an inexpensive newsletter to secondary schools (at an estimated cost of the order of \$500 per issue). The first issue would be a free one, and contain order forms for future subscription.

The idea was approved by the National Committee, with the suggestion that a submission be made to Council for a grant from the Department of Education and Science. The submission would be accompanied by a draft copy of the first brochure.

4 Amendments to the "Provisional Australian Programme".

After some discussion as to whether a supplement to the provisional programme or a complete amended programme be issued, the second alternative was chosen. It was estimated that all corrections, amendments and additions could be submitted by conveners within about a fortnight. The revised edition would then become the official Australian programme.

5 Pacific Science Congress

It was noted that the Pacific Science Committee proposed that an IBP series of symposia be held in conjunction with the 1971 Congress.

6 Aerospore Dispersal

A letter was tabled from Dr. D. Walker of the A.N.U. Department of Geography containing a proposal that steps be taken in Australia to study the question of the atmospheric dispersal of biologically significant materials. It was agreed that Dr. Walker should be invited to convene a small ad hoc group to develop the proposal and to report to the committee.

The meeting closed at 4.45 p.m.

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20 June 1967.

Notes on H.A. Activities

Australian Aborigines

Arnhem Land. This represents an attempt to co-ordinate multiple studies on aborigines in the area. Secondment of officers from the Commonwealth Department is in the interest of native welfare, and will not involve additional expense.

Western Desert. These investigations are to be financed from Western Australian sources.

New Guinea. The multidisciplinary studies at Madang and later at Goroka are the subject of the Academy of Science Submission to the Government. This proposal is based on the proposed Institute of Human Biology and is a collaborative undertaking with the U.K. National IBP Committee.

Pari Village. This project is directed by Dr. I. Maddocks of the Papuan Medical School. It was commenced before the IBP programme was formulated and its cost is completely covered within the resources available to Dr. Maddocks, but it has been stimulated and broadened by its incorporation with the IBP.

Kuru. The study of this disease is similarly supported by the Department of Public Health, New Guinea; had been commenced several years before the IBP, and was included in the IBP programme because of international interest in the unique problem.

Cardiovascular Disease. This project is supported by the Australian National University and the National Heart Foundation. It has perhaps been stimulated by IBP but was not initiated by IBP.

Australian Urban Population. This study was stimulated by the IBP but in a less developed form had been discussed by the Department of Public Health of New South Wales. The cost of the survey will be covered by the Department of Public Health.

Special Projects. The School of Public Health, University of Sydney will make submissions through its normal channels for partial support (the remainder will come from the U.K. Committee) of the studies in environmental physiology.

The work of the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine, University of Queensland, on skin carcinoma has been going on for some years, and is financed by independent grant-giving bodies.

The salt and water metabolism studies proposed by Professor V. M. Macfarlane, University of Adelaide, have also been in progress for some years and are independently financed.

R. J. Walsh

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