

AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCE



NC 18/67

National Committee for the IBP : Sub-Committee H.A.

A meeting of the Sub-Committee was held in the Assistant Secretary's Office at the Academy on Wednesday 15 February 1967 at 11.30 a.m.

Present: Professor R.J. Walsh (Chairman)
Professor W.V. Macfarlane (Deputy Chairman)
Sir Otto Frankel (Chairman of National Committee)
Dr. R.K. Macpherson
Dr. Norma McArthur

Apologies for absense were received from Professor A.A. Abbie and Professor M.J.D. White.

The Assistant Secretary was in attendance.

1. Composition of the Committee

Professor Walsh reported that Dr. R. Kirk had resigned from W.H.O. to take up a position in Australia. It was resolved to recommend to the National Committee his appointment to the H.A. Sub-Committee.

2. Distribution of Circulars

After some discussion as to who should receive various IBP publications, Professor Walsh offered to prepare a distribution list.

It was decided that Australian Journal of Science reprints relating to the Programme, and reprints of the Angela Croome articles should be sent to all Section Committee members, and the H.A. Section Newsletter to all H.A. members.

3. Proposed Australian Projects

Sir Otto Frankel reported that the National Committee had accepted the Provisional Programme, but recognised the possible future needs for revision.

Professor Walsh reported that the entire H.A. programme proposals had been enthusiastically received by the International Committee and all projects were considered very relevant and of high priority.

H.A. 1 (Arnhem Land and W.A.) and H.A. 11 (New Guinea)

It was resolved that the Advisory Committee established for project H.A. 1 be extended to include project H.A. 11. It was further resolved to invite Dr. Kirk to act as co-ordinator, Dr. Langsford to join as a corresponding member, and to replace Professor Walsh as a full member by Professor Macfarlane. The composition of the Advisory Committee would then become: Dr. R. Kirk (co-ordinator), Professor Abbie, Dr. F.W. Clements, Professor Fenner, Dr. McArthur, Professor Macfarlane, Dr. Macpherson and Dr. Langsford (corresponding member).

It was decided to write to Professor Abbie and ask him for details of his proposed programmes.

In connection with the H.A. 11 project, Sir Macfarlane Burnet and Professor Walsh had recently returned from a visit to New Guinea where they held discussions with the Papua-New Guinea Medical Advisory Service. Agreement was reached that New Guinea should contribute two field workers, Australia one (trained in epidemiology and genetic fieldwork) and the Royal Society two. The U.K. and Australia would also supply consultants.

An assurance was received that legislation to establish a New Guinea Institute of Human Biology could be introduced before 4 April, the date Sir Macfarlane and Professor Walsh would be departing for London.

It was resolved to request the Royal Society to supply either three or four consultants, to include if possible, specialists in "nutrition", "working capacity" and "environmental physiology". Five Australian consultants were nominated: Sir Otto Frankel, Dr. McArthur, Professor Macfarlane Professor Macpherson and Professor Walsh.

It was further resolved that a joint visit of consultants from both countries be planned for mid- or late -July. The duration of the visit should be at least seven days to allow a number of villages to be visited for preliminary assessment purposes.

The New Guinea authorities have nominated Dr. Stanhope to participate in the demographic survey, the suggestion being that he be trained in Australia. Dr. McArthur suggested instead that Dr. D.J. Van de Kaa, a Research Fellow in the A.N.U. Department of Demography, could visit New Guinea as part of his work with the A.N.U. and assist the programme by giving Dr. Stanhope training in the field. This was agreed to be a superior plan, and appreciation was expressed to Dr. McArthur.

It was also decided to suggest to the Medical Research Advisory Committee, which is directing the Kuru investigation, some extension of their demographic work, and that either Dr. McArthur or Dr. Van de Kaa visit the area in July, to consult with Dr. J. Mathews.

H.A. 111 (Immigrants in the Australian Population)

It was decided that in this survey it would be desirable to record the following: height, weight, a width component, subscapular skinfold, the age of the menarche in girls.

H.A. 1V (Special Projects)

A. Environmental Physiology: The National Committee supports this project and would like to hear proposals for its financing. It was pointed out that Government policy was opposed to giving financial support to activities conducted under the auspices of other Governmental agencies.

Professor Macpherson agreed to formulate and submit programme plans.

B. Cold Tolerance: It was decided to ask Professor Whelan to formulate and submit any plans he might have for his cold acclimatisation work.

C. Skin Carcinoma: It was decided to inform Professor G Gordon that only those of his proposals dealing with epidemiosis came within the scope of the I.B.P.

D. Studies of Salt and Water Metabolism: Professor Macfarlane reported that this work would continue on existing funds. He agreed to formulate and submit programme plans.

4. Correspondence

There was discussion on the question of requests from individuals to make studies amongst the aboriginal population. Such requests are referred for advice to the National Committee by the Department of Public Health.

It was agreed that unless a project could be incorporated within the multidisciplinary activities of the I.B.P. it should, in general, be opposed.

(a) Institute of Aboriginal Affairs.

A letter was received asking what financial assistance might be sought from them for the Arnhem Land and Western Australian studies.

It was decided to reply that the H.A. Sub-Committee was examining the proposals, but was not yet in a position to estimate requirements; and to refer their letter to Professor Abbie.

(b) Dr. F.W. Clements.

*School of Public Health
- being Public Medicine
Univ. of Sydney* } Programme already under way

A letter concerning his proposal to study child growth-rate patterns in the Northern Territory was received. Professor Walsh agreed to approach him and find out whether he wishes to have his study written into the IBP Programme.

(c) Dr. Mary Chennells.

A letter was received about a proposed study of athletes.

It was felt that this could not be included in the Australian Programme and it was decided to inform Dr. Chennells of the U.K. interest in this field.

The meeting closed at 4.00 p.m.

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9 March 1967.