

AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCE



NC 29/66

Australian National Committee for the IBP

A meeting of the committee was held in the Council Room on Friday 16 September 1966 at 10.00 a.m.

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

Also present by invitation were Dr F.J. Bergersen, Dr K.W. Finlay, Dr R.O. Slatyer and Dr D.F. Waterhouse. Apologies were received from Professor A.A. Abbie and Professor M.J.D. White.

The Executive Secretary and Assistant Secretary were in attendance.

1 The Minutes of the previous meeting (31 May 1966) were confirmed.

2 Matters Arising from the Minutes

Secretary B reported on Council's response to proposals made by the HA and the PCT sub-committees for projects in New Guinea and Alice Springs respectively.

The New Guinea Director of Public Health, Dr Scragg is interested in the HA project and proposals for a New Guinea Institute have been drafted. Dr Scragg would like officers from his department to be seconded for training as field officers; specialised work would be carried out by U.K. and Australian experts. Air conditioned accommodation is now available at Madang and in mid-1968 more will be available at Goroka. In view of the interest shown by the New Guinea Department of Public Health, a submission to Senator Gorton will be deferred until the extent of their proposed contribution has been ascertained.

Council had rejected the PCT proposals, mainly on the grounds of administrative difficulties. Some further developments were then reported by Dr Slatyer resulting from a discussion with Professor Schollander of the U.S. who thought that his country might be interested in an International venture at Alice Springs. Their IBP Committee would not be interested in the first stage, that of building the centre, but might be interested once it had been developed. The CSIRO ~~Division of Land Research~~ was now considering the possibility of arid and semi-arid stations at Alice Springs, Deniliquin and Cunnamulla to be established on a national basis by including such interested parties as ~~Plant Research~~ and the Universities. The matter would be discussed at a CSIRO committee meeting on Monday 19 September and Dr Slatyer offered to send a report to Sir Otto Frankel.

CSIRO
Division of
of Plant Industry
Land Research

The meeting felt that the above proposals related directly to the views of the committee and expressed strong support. It further felt that in future discussions of the project, it might be useful for the IBP committee to be represented.

Wildlife
Research

3

Reports on International Meetings and Activities

Proposals for joint IBP/UNESCO projects for 1967/68 were considered and it was decided to urge support for such activities through the Australian UNESCO Committee.

Reports were received on the Tokyo meeting on biological control from Dr Waterhouse and on the Moscow Microbiology Conference from Dr Bergersen. At the latter, a general feeling was expressed that many of the proposed programmes were not of an international nature and no benefit was to be derived by including them as IBP activities. However, five or six proposals of true international character had been made. In 1968, an international soil conference would be held in Adelaide and following it might be a good opportunity to hold a colloquium on nitrogen fixation, possibly in Canberra. This idea was approved by the meeting and detailed budget and publications proposals will be prepared.

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Participation in Specific International Projects

The main question discussed was the attitude to be taken by the Australian committee with respect to simple experiments of little research value but useful in involving developing countries in IBP activity. It was decided that if there was general international agreement to conduct such experiments, then Australia should also co-operate. Little additional work would be involved and it could all be carried out at the existent, more sophisticated centres.

5

The Australian Programme

For phase II it was thought necessary to split PCT into working groups. The following proposals were adopted -

PT Ecology -	(i) ^{Forestry} Flow of Nutrients;	Convener - Prof. Ovington
	(ii) Nitrogen Assimilation ^{Transformation} ;	Convener - Dr R. Millington
PT Herbivores	-	Convener - Prof. D.E. Tribe
PT Decomposers	-	Convener - Dr R.J. Swaby
PP Photosynthesis	-	Convener - Prof. R.L. Specht
PP Nitrogen Fixation	-	Convener - Dr F.J. Bergersen
CT	-	Convener - Dr M.F. Day
Cereals	-	Convener - Prof. C.M. Donald

Each Convener will be invited to nominate members of his working group.

It was reported that the Australian programme for the HA section had been approved by the Sectional Committee. Dr Boyden raised the question of man's adaptation problems in an urban community. It was agreed that this important aspect had been neglected and Dr Boyden was invited to prepare a paper for further discussion.

Dr Humphrey reported on section PFM and said that no action was necessary at this stage. Steps towards phase II would develop naturally and results would be evident in about four years.

In section UM, Sir Otto Frankel reported on gene pools and his two months with FAO. Little was being done by the latter in the field of plant exploration and perhaps IBP could provide some stimulus. Dr Finaly reported on the biology of adaptation and Professor Donald on grain production in cereals.

The question of public relations and the lack of knowledge of IBP, even by scientists, was discussed. Dr Boyden undertook to convene a sub-committee whose purpose would be to remedy this situation and whose members need not necessarily be biologists.

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Review of Composition of Committees

The PCT committee will now consist of the eight conveners of working groups, previously appointed, together with Professor Specht as Chairman

Dr Rendel had resigned from UM. It was agreed to appoint Dr K.W. Finlay as Chairman and Sir Otto Frankel would remain a member.

It was thought desirable that all conveners of section committees should be members of the National Committee. It was agreed to recommend to Council that Professors Abbie and White be replaced by Dr Waterhouse and Dr Finlay.

Professor Specht was asked to prepare an estimate of the cost of working group meetings for the financial year.

The meeting closed at 4.30 p.m.

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7 October 1966.