

COMMISSION 6: ASTRONOMICAL TELEGRAMS (TÉLÉGRAMMES ASTRONOMIQUES)

Report of Meeting, 23 August 1973

PRESIDENT: P. Simon.

SECRETARY: B. G. Marsden.

On opening the meeting, the President invited the Secretary to make a few remarks concerning the proposal for the new President of the Commission. The Secretary reported that the Vice-President, J. Hers, had decided that it would be inappropriate for him to take the normal course and succeed to the presidency. Elaborating on this point, the Secretary referred to the long and fruitful association of Mr Hers and three former directors of the Republic (formerly Union) Observatory, Johannesburg, with Commission 6. The makeshift relegation of the Republic Observatory to the status of an obscure and understaffed 'outstation' of the South African Astronomical Observatory had effectively removed Mr Hers from the astronomical scene. It should be stressed that Mr Hers' decision is entirely his own. Although no longer connected with any astronomical institution, Mr Hers continues to assist the work of the Commission in South Africa, and the Secretary was happy to note that he would remain a member of the Commission.

It was therefore decided that P. Simon would serve another term as President; E. Roemer was proposed as incoming Vice-President. No new members were proposed, but F. L. Whipple announced his retirement from the Commission: all present expressed their great appreciation of his services.

The President requested and received the approval of the meeting for his earlier recommendation to the Finance Committee that the Central Telegram Bureau receive a subvention of \$1600 for the triennium 1974-76. [The recommendation was accepted, the amount of the subvention being increased to \$1980.]

The question of the future of the reports of Commission 6 was discussed. The Secretary pointed out that for the past three years *annual* reports of the Central Bureau had appeared in the *IAU Information Bulletin*. There thus seemed to be no strong points in favor of publication of triennial reports in the *IAU Transactions*.

The Secretary then briefly described the new billing system for the *IAU Circulars*. It had been at the Prague meeting that the suggestion to put the system on to a calendrical basis was made. The Secretary was glad to report that, although the suggestion had taken almost six years to put into practice, such a system had in fact been in operation since 1 May 1973. The new system seemed to be working extremely satisfactorily, and it included the feature that all regular subscribers would be billed at the rate of 20¢ per issue, irrespective of geographical location. Subscribers in North America could receive the *Circulars* at the special rate of only 15¢ per issue (and for a specific number of *Circulars*), provided that they did not require invoices or reminder cards and would keep track themselves of the number of *Circulars* remaining in their subscriptions.

The Secretary announced that, since the conventions for the telegraphic code appeared to have stabilized, it would be appropriate to prepare a new edition of the 'code book', and he hoped that it would be possible to incorporate this in *IAU Trans. XVB*.

The Secretary then referred to his remarks at the Brighton meeting concerning the inappropriateness of the *Circulars* for the publication of many of the items transmitted to the Central Bureau. The situation was now even more extreme. During the twelve months preceding the Brighton meeting some 100 *Circulars* had been published: the figure for the twelve months preceding the Sydney meeting was closer to 140. The Commission agreed that the situation had now become unmanageable, and in the hope that the rate of publication of the *Circulars* would again be decreasing in the future, the Commission adopted the resolution given below.

Resolution

Commission 6 calls attention to the fact that the purpose of the IAU *Circulars* is to report and to stimulate timely observations of astronomical phenomena. Therefore, the Commission instructs the Director of the Central Bureau for Astronomical Telegrams to exercise discretion in editing material received to conform with this purpose.