

Commission 4. (EPHÉMÉRIDES.)

Professor W. S. Eichelberger, President of the Commission, presided. Dr Jackson acted as Secretary.

The President announced that the resolution concerning the use of 1950.0 as a standard equinox for cometary and asteroid work had been discussed in Commission 20 which approved the arrangements which have been made by the Directors of the National Ephemerides to change over to the equinox of 1950.

The subject was not discussed further.

The resolution concerning the adoption of fixed dates for elements and ephemerides of comets and minor planets had been discussed in Commission 6 where a definite arrangement had been agreed upon.

The Commission then discussed the two proposals on the terminology of time. After considerable discussion in which it was made clear that the *British Nautical Almanac* was committed to use the letters G.M.T. for time counted from Greenwich Mean Midnight, the following was adopted:

“In all astronomical work, times given should indicate clearly whether the day used begins at noon or midnight.”

Dr Jackson referred to the work which he is doing in collaboration with Dr Knox-Shaw in the reduction of the observations made by Hornsby at Oxford in 1774–1803. In order to fix the equator of the instrument a complete ephemeris of the sun, based on Newcomb's tables and computed with modern accuracy, has been made for every day in the years 1775–1784 and 1790–1796. To check the rotation of the earth, and also the equator point, it is desirable to reduce the numerous observations of planets. Mr Bawtree, formerly of the *British Nautical Almanac* Office has agreed to compute an ephemeris of Venus for 1780–1784. Offers of help in further calculations of planetary ephemerides were asked for.

Dr Jackson also mentioned that in the determination of the equator point the minor planet Vesta had certain advantages over the sun and the major planets and he suggested that it would be useful to have tables of this planet computed with Newcomb's values of the masses of Jupiter and Mars.

The members of the Commission present at the Leiden Meeting, MM. Andoyer, Brown, Eichelberger, Herrero, Jackson and Volta, submitted the following:

The terms Greenwich Civil Time (G.C.T.), Weltzeit (W.Z.) and Universal Time (U.T.) denote time measured from Greenwich Mean Midnight, and are not ambiguous. The name Greenwich Mean Time (G.M.T.) for dates before 1925 Jan. 1, refers to time counted from Greenwich Mean Noon, but as used after that date in British publications it refers to time counted from midnight. Astronomers are advised not to use the letters G.M.T. in any sense for the present.

Some astronomers desire to employ time counted from Greenwich Mean Noon. For that purpose the letters G.M.T. are no longer available. The expression Greenwich Mean Astronomical Time (G.M.A.T.) though long is the most satisfactory for describing time counted from Greenwich Mean Noon. The Julian day is counted from Greenwich Mean Noon.

Commission 5. (BIBLIOGRAPHIE.)

La V^e Commission s'est réunie à deux reprises différentes, sous la présidence de M. Stroobant, afin de discuter en détail le rapport qui avait été présenté par son secrétaire, ainsi que les résolutions consécutives proposées à ses délibérations (voir pp. 19–39).