

38. COMMISSION POUR L'ÉCHANGE DES ASTRONOMES

Report of Meeting, 17 August 1961

PRESIDENT: M. G. J. Minnaert.

SECRETARY: Bart J. Bok.

In his opening remarks, the President paid high tribute to the memory of Professor Stratton, who was the first President of Commission 38 and who for many years guided its work with kindness and with wisdom. He also presented a brief tribute to Dr Dawson, who for the past six years had represented South America on the membership.

The *Report* of the Commission was accepted. The importance of keeping up to date the Addendum—which deals with a listing of 'Facilities for Visiting Astronomers'—was stressed. Dr Page suggested that an additional paragraph be included to describe the Foreign Visitors Program of the American Astronomical Society, sponsored by the United States National Science Foundation.

The Commission agreed to the proposal that its President should from time to time prepare material for inclusion in an IAU *Information Bulletin*—so as to ensure that all astronomers— young and old—shall be constantly aware of the opportunities for exchanges and visits abroad that do exist.

Dr Kourganoff and others drew attention to the problems of an administrative nature that arise, especially in regard to Fulbright Awards, because of the great time-lags between the initiation of an application, the making of the award, and the starting time of the fellowship. The President was requested to write to the Foreign Secretary of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences requesting that this 'lead-time' be shortened appreciably.

More flexibility in fellowship awards was urged for NATO Fellowships, notably in regard to the time interval for which one of these fellowships can be held. The value of short-term fellowships for experienced scientists was stressed during the discussion. It will be brought to the attention of the Ministers of Education of some countries.

In the past it has been the policy of the Commission to support principally requests for small travel grants. Because of the growing need for travel abroad by astronomers from remote countries (Japan, Australia, Latin America), coupled with the desires of European astronomers to work in these countries, the need is recognised for increased future emphasis on a limited number of larger grants. The meeting stressed the great value of the flexible approach to awards that was the traditional policy of the late President Stratton, and Professor Minnaert also favours the following of no set rules.

It was decided that, in the normal course of events, there will be two closing dates for the receipt of applications, 1 January and 1 July. But it was noted that exceptions will and should be made and that applicants should not hesitate to write to the President during the intervening months, especially in cases of urgency.

The meeting voted unanimously to request the Executive Committee to increase the annual budget from its present level of \$6,000 to \$10,000 annually. This substantial increase seems justified for the following reasons:

- (a) increases in travel costs alone warrant a substantial increase;

- (b) there will be more emphasis on travel between distant points in the future than there was in the past;
- (c) the number of countries involved in astronomical research is growing and so is the number of astronomers in each country;
- (d) many more competent young astronomers are needed now than was the case ten or more years ago.

[The Finance Committee was able to provide, in its budget, only an increase to \$7500.]

The Commission agreed to recommend the following composition of the Organizing Committee: M. G. J. Minnaert, President; P. Swings, Vice-President; B. J. Bok, A. A. Mikhailov, T. L. Page, members. The hope was expressed that the present members of the Commission will continue to serve during the next triennium and that the following will also agree to serve as members of the Commission: Bappu, Kienle, Kourganoff, Miyamoto, Righini, Sahade, Thackeray, Woolley.