

Ref. 033.425
GFH/CV

23 AUG 1968

The Secretary of SCOR,
Deutsches Hydrographisches Institut,
Bernhard-Nochstrasse 78,
HAMBURG 4
GERMANY

Dear Dr Bohnecke,

I think one question which we should now give attention to is that of the working groups. These groups have been in existence for some time - many have done good work, others have not. All have worked during a period when there have been great developments in the pattern of oceanographic science and oceanographic organization. I think the time is ripe for a review of the activities of the groups so that some can be discontinued, others can be asked to continue as at present or do new work, and entirely new ones can be formed to undertake work in other fields.

My comments on the present groups are as follows:-

1. Radioactivity in the Ocean.- This group has been active and it seems it will co-operate closely and usefully with IAEA. My impression from our recent meetings is that it has been left to Miyake to confer with IAEA and if necessary change the composition of the group. I think that before Miyake approaches any prospective new members he should confer with SCOR. I agree with the Russian suggestion that Sorokin belongs more properly in W.G.3 and we must discover if the Russians wish to retain their connection with W.G.1.

I suggest that I write to Miyake to find out what he proposes so that I can keep our Bureau informed.

2. Carbon Dioxide in the Ocean and Atmosphere.- I am not clear what this group is actually doing. I suggest I write to the Convener and ask for a statement on activities so we can circulate it to SCOR; also I would like an outline of the future programme.

3. Measurement of the Productivity of the Sea and of the Standing Crops of Phytoplankton and Zooplankton.- The size of the title indicates the difficulty this group faces in deciding what it should do. This group drifted into becoming the biology W.G. for the Indian Ocean and then this function was given to the new subcommittee formed with Currie as Convener.

I think this group should be named Biological Production in the Sea and it should be reconstituted.

4. Physical Properties of Sea Water.- Was the main purpose of this group a consideration of ionic ratios and problems concerned in the change from titration to conductivity measurements for the measurement of salinity? Cox gave a paper in Helsinki on this and it seems there is still work to be done. The membership of this group could be improved.

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5. International Indian Ocean Expedition.- This group and the reconstituted subgroups have done as much as they can and further progress is in the hands of small groups of workers to be called together for specific purposes. There will be general matters for which a permanent group may be needed. The formation of such a group should be left until the need arises and then W.G.5 should again be reconstituted.

6. Chemical Oceanography.- This group is another which is undergoing reconstitution. I think it is in danger of following the pattern of W.G.3, i.e. it was formed for a purpose and is tending to become a chemical group for the Indian Ocean. Its personnel is such that it cannot effectively assume this new role. The chemical problems of the Indian Ocean should be left to the chemists who are to work there, with the addition of one or two specialists, e.g. Ketchum.

This matter is under consideration elsewhere, i.e. the proposal for a working, sea-going meeting of nutrient chemists in Hawaii in August 1961 and a proposal for a visit to the University of Washington at about the same time.

7. World Data Centres.- Many international bodies have passed resolutions on this topic and action will probably be taken only by an IOC or equivalent body. I think we should leave W.G.7 as it is. It may be needed if an IOC asks SCOR for advice.

8. Radio aids to Navigation.- It was suggested at Copenhagen that Mr Snider be the Convener and that he propose names to SCOR. I think this procedure should be adopted and that we should discuss names and objects with Snider.

We must be careful not to upset the whole concept of our working groups, but we must see that we are not neglecting important developments. We should not have groups which drift into permanency which becomes inaction.

I would like your comments on the working groups and on the remarks I have made. When we have exchanged our views I think that I should write to all national committees asking -

- (a) Suggestions for topics needing new groups
- (b) Suggestions for activities by the present groups
- (c) Names of workers in their countries in the fields of activity of the groups

Such a procedure would bring the committees into action and make them feel they had something to do. Also we might find some new people who would be valuable members of working groups. All this would go a long way to answer the criticism that we need national representation in order to get a proper geographical spread in our activities.

Yours sincerely,

(G.F. HUMPHREY)
President of SCOR