

NOTES AND REVIEWS

TEMPORARY COMMISSION ON THE LIQUIDATION OF THE
SECOND INTERNATIONAL POLAR YEAR, 1932-33

[Note by Jno. A. Fleming, President of the Temporary Commission on the Liquidation of the Second International Polar Year, 1932-33, International Meteorological Organisation, Washington, D.C.]

The Second International Polar Year of 1932-33 was sponsored by the International Meteorological Organisation, and involved world-wide co-operation in a meteorological and magnetic programme. It marked the fiftieth anniversary of the First International Polar Year of 1882-83, which was the result of a suggestion made in 1875 by Lieutenant Karl Weyprecht. The results obtained in 1882-83 had shown how much a uniform programme to obtain simultaneous data at many stations in high latitudes enhances the scientific value of polar observations.

The International Meteorological Organisation, in planning a second international project in the polar regions, felt that progress since 1883 again called for international pooling of resources, instruments, methods, and staff. The preparation of the details for the second programme was assigned to a special International Polar Year Commission under the presidency of the late Dr D. la Cour, who was then Director of Dansk Meteorologisk Institut (Danish Meteorological Institute). World-wide interest in the project was roused by Dr la Cour's enthusiasm. Despite the economic depression of the early 1930's, not only government appropriations from some forty-four countries but also liberal grants from scientific endowments were obtained. The resulting network of stations in polar regions, established by twenty-two expeditions, was augmented by special programmes at existing observatories in lower latitudes.

The chief subjects to which the programme was devoted were meteorology, geomagnetism, earth-currents, atmospheric electricity and aurora. The realisation of the project, which included the design and construction of various instruments of special kinds, is a monument to the enthusiasm and indefatigability of Dr la Cour and to the generous support and example of Dansk Meteorologisk Institut.

The study and discussion of the data obtained produced many valuable contributions to knowledge before 1939. The interruption and unrest occasioned by the war left much material not fully compiled or discussed, as well as some unpublished manuscripts and others only partly finished. This interruption and the death of Dr la Cour interfered with the process of compiling and discussing the data obtained at great cost by all those who took part.

The International Meteorological Organisation therefore appointed, in November 1946, a special committee to consider and report upon what should or might be done within a definite time to complete reductions, analyses, discussions, and publications. The committee made its report to the Directors'

Conference of the International Meteorological Organisation at Washington on 8 October 1947. The report was accepted and adopted by the Conference, and a Temporary Commission on the Liquidation of the Second Polar Year was appointed. The commission, which consisted of Jno. A. Fleming (United States), President, J. Keränen (Finland), H. Petersen (Denmark), J. M. Stagg (Great Britain), H. U. Sverdrup (Norway), and A. Thomson (Canada), was instructed to arrange for the completion of all compilations, analyses, discussions, and final publications not later than 31 December 1950. It was asked to co-opt the services of any who might aid completion of agenda on or before that terminal date. The commission was given authority to receive and to disburse funds for necessary services and costs of publication, to set up a central bureau for necessary administration and as a repository for all material and publications, and to appoint, subject to the approval of the director of the organisation designated to house the central bureau, a part-time or full-time paid executive officer under the direction of the commission. In accordance with these instructions the central bureau, with the approval of the Danish ministry concerned, was established early in 1948 at Dansk Meteorologisk Institut, and Dr V. Laursen was designated as executive officer under the immediate supervision of H. Petersen, Director of the Institute.

The new commission took over the balance (some \$7000) in funds made available to the original International Polar Year Commission, and this sum was supplemented in December 1947 by a final grant of \$12,000 from the Rockefeller Foundation. A large part of these funds has already been set aside for the following items: clerical assistance, office expenses, and travelling expenses for the staff of the central bureau at Copenhagen; compilation of a complete bibliography of publications and microfilms and their availability for distribution; reduction and publication of magnetic records for stations at Magellanes and Tatuoca; investigations and report concerning the best way of utilising magnetic records; investigations of auroral observations and report on the best means of utilising them; completion and publication of Northern Hemisphere maps; and special discussions of accumulated data by competent investigators and their publication.

The central bureau is also preparing an inventory of all instruments and property of the International Polar Year Commission, and any items available will be distributed, by gift or loan, before the end of 1950, for projects which may be submitted and considered worthy.

One of the most important tasks which the central bureau has undertaken is a complete historical summary, which will include official resolutions relating to the enterprise, by reference to published sources and complete lists of the observatories taking part, with accounts of programmes and personnel. The absence of such a summary concerning the First International Polar Year of 1882-83 has been a handicap to investigators seeking materials, results, and references to publications resulting from that project. It is hoped that this summary will be comprehensive enough to serve effectively as a reference for future investigators.

The liquidation of the agenda is being accomplished under the four general

allocations of subjects as above indicated, namely, meteorology, geomagnetism, aurora, and aerology. While a large part of the available funds has been set aside for the items already approved, there is still a small balance unappropriated, which must be returned if not expended before 31 December 1950. It is therefore urgent that persons having any reductions or analyses in mind should communicate synopses of the work contemplated and estimates of funds needed to Dr V. Laursen, the executive officer of the central bureau in Copenhagen. The commission also requests anyone who has already published results or who is planning further research based on data obtained during the Second International Polar Year to communicate with the commission as soon as possible.

NEW REGULATIONS CONCERNING TRAVEL TO AND IN GREENLAND, 1948

[From *Kundgørelser vedrørende Grønlands Styrelse*, 1948, Nr. 5, p. 65–67. This notice replaces the regulations for travel in Greenland published in *Kundgørelser vedrørende Grønlands Styrelse*, 1939, Nr. 2, p. 22–23, which came into force on 15 May 1939.]

Translation:

“1. Unless anything to the contrary has been provided by special treaty between Denmark and a foreign country or by other special arrangement, no travel to or in Greenland can be undertaken without special permission from the Danish Government.

“2. Danish citizens who desire a travel permit must in reasonable time before departure forward an application to Statsministeriet, Grønlands Styrelse [Greenland Administration].

“3. Foreigners who desire a travel permit must in reasonable time before departure forward an application to the Danish Government through the Government of their own country.

“4. The application, or a programme for the journey appended to it, must include information about the following points:

“(a) The names of those travelling and their nationality.

“(b) The proposed route, especially if the traveller desires to be conveyed by ships of Grønlands Styrelse, or if he can provide his own transport to and from Greenland as well as for journeys in Greenland.

“(c) The time when he desires to arrive in Greenland and the contemplated duration of his stay there.

“(d) The object of the journey.

“(e) Which places and areas he intends to visit.

“(f) The probable equipment to be taken, including scientific apparatus, travelling equipment and provisions, including spirits. If the traveller desires the equipment to be transported by Grønlands Styrelse ships, weight and volume must be stated.

“5. Prior to departure such security must be found as may be required by Grønlands Styrelse to cover any amount due to them for transport, freight, cash advances and supplies during the stay in Greenland.