

6. COMMISSION DES TELEGRAMMES ASTRONOMIQUES (Comité du Comité Exécutif)

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Le Comité Exécutif de l'Union Astronomique Internationale a appris avec peine le décès du Dr A. R. Hogg, Président de la Commission 6 depuis 1961.

Le Professeur F. L. Whipple a bien voulu accepter de préparer ce rapport et d'assumer le rôle de Président par interim de la Commission. Il a préparé le présent rapport, assisté par le Dr O. Gingerich, Directeur du Bureau des Télégrammes Astronomiques.

INTRODUCTION

At the Twelfth General Assembly of the IAU in Hamburg, arrangements were made to move the Central Bureau from its traditional home in Copenhagen to Cambridge. The gradual increase in the number of subscribers, coupled with the erratic nature of the Bureau's work—periods of intense activity when spectacular comets appear alternating with many weeks of inactivity—made it desirable to locate the Bureau at a larger observatory. In its new headquarters at the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory, the Central Bureau can call upon the services of the round-the-clock communication center, the network of astrophysical observing stations (with their Baker-Nunn cameras, which are ideal for confirming bright comets), the computations center, and the publications division.

Dr Gingerich, whose unusually able services brought about the smooth and efficient transfer of the Bureau to its new location, has indicated his intention to resign as the Bureau's Director, since his own interests lie primarily elsewhere. Dr Marsden, who has played an increasingly active role as an Associate Director and who is a specialist in the computation of comet orbits, would appear to be the logical choice for the new Director. Dr Gingerich and Dr Southworth would then serve as Associate Directors. The Commission is truly indebted to Dr Gingerich for his skill and perseverance in effecting the transfer of the Central Bureau.

F. L. WHIPPLE
Acting President of the Commission

REPORT OF THE CENTRAL BUREAU FOR ASTRONOMICAL TELEGRAMS

In its first year in Cambridge, the Central Bureau distributed 64 numbered *Circulars* on 53 occasions. These carried information about 16 supernovae and ten comets discovered during 1965. The most extensive activity resulted from the spectacular sun-grazing comet, Ikeya-Seki, for which 11 *Circulars* were issued in a period of six weeks. In its second year, the Central Bureau issued 39 numbered *Circulars* on 30 occasions. These carried information about five supernovae and six comets discovered during 1966. Since 17 comets are predicted to come to perihelion during 1967, we can anticipate considerable activity in the Bureau.

When the Central Bureau moved to Cambridge, the *Harvard Announcement Cards* were discontinued, and their subscribers began to receive the *Circulars*. This more than doubled the number of subscribers, so that at present over 600 *Circulars* are mailed to 50 countries.

The telegram activity of the Bureau is somewhat harder to measure; 43 'telegram books' were distributed to a large block of domestic subscribers as well as to the AGIWARN system during 1965 and 1966. It is difficult to count the actual number of recipients because the telegrams are relayed to partial lists of subscribers according to various categories. In addition, on special occasions messages were sent to only a few selected observatories.

The international distribution of telegrams has worked out magnificently through the AGIWARN system of the International Ursigram and World Days Service. In particular, the arrangements made by Dr R. Michard and the effort of Dr P. Simon at Meudon have facilitated the redistribution of most of the European telegrams. Telegrams to South Africa, Japan, and some points of South America have been relayed through the telegram-link connecting the Smithsonian Observatory with its astrophysical observing stations.

The task of collecting advance telegram deposits for the subscribers served from the Meudon Center has proved rather formidable, and several European subscribers are still delinquent in sending in their deposits. Similarly, many observatories have been lax in responding to our expiration notices. Since the *Circulars* are addressed by a computer program, the failure to renew promptly results automatically in an interruption of service.

At the Hamburg Meeting of the IAU, suggestions for an improved telegram code were discussed, and fortunately it was possible to introduce the revisions at the same time that the transfer of the Central Bureau took place. The success of the new code is perhaps most vividly shown by the awkward situation that almost inevitably arises when an occasional astronomer transmits a message in the old form: it is then generally necessary to telegraph back asking for the equinox of the observations. In addition to the explicit inclusion of the equinox in the revised code, the time of observation is given in decimals of day, there is a continuous ordering of data in the accurate position code, and a more precise description of magnitudes is provided. An explanation of the new code appears in the IAU Handbook (*Transactions*, XII C); a list of errata are attached to this report. Corrected reprints of the code are available through the Central Bureau.

During 1965 and 1966, \$7328.00 were received for subscriptions to the *Circulars*, which covered only the printing and postage. The continuing operation of the Bureau requires more than the equivalent of one full-time worker, which is supplied by the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory. The subvention of \$666.00 per year from the IAU pays for very little of the actual operation of the Bureau, but it provides considerable moral support and gives the operation a desirable flexibility that it would not otherwise have. It seems entirely reasonable to ask that the IAU subvention be raised to at least \$1000 per year.

OWEN GINGERICH
Director of the Bureau

APPENDIX. ERRATA ET CORRIGENDA FOR IAU TRANSACTIONS XIIC.

- p. 33 Strike out category H and for category G read:
G. GAMMA All others, including planetary or lunar phenomena, spectroscopic binaries, etc.
- p. 34 The Air Mail rates in the column 'Other' are now \$8.50 and \$16.50. *Under Middle groups for a position*, the fifth approximate group should read: XNMMP.
- p. 35 The fifth line should read:
8. X = X, the character for a nonsignificant digit.

p. 36 The fourth line should read:

K. KKKK = q in A.U.

The last line of the first example should read:

R.A. — 1^m2, in Dec. + 12'.

p. 37 The first line should read:

3. CANDY COMET CANDY 19503 10208 58335 13625 17656 15092 10640 45059
CANDY.