

U.N.E.S.C.O. CONFERENCE ON OCEANOGRAPHY

This Conference was held in August 1958 at Cronulla, New South Wales, with delegates from New Zealand, New Caledonia and Australia representing biological and physical sciences, and a number of observers, including Prof. R.B.Montgomery (John Hopkins University) U.S.A., Mr. W.C.Swinbank (C.S.I.R.O. Meteorological Physics Division) and Mr. H.G.Bond, Bureau of Meteorology. Several other observers represented sections of work (data processing, primary production, zoo-plankton and phyto-plankton studies) at the Division of Fisheries and Oceanography, C.S.I.R.O. Cronulla.

Monsieur H.Rotshi of the French Delegation was elected chairman of the Conference. The work covered consideration of national reports, programmes in progress and contemplated, and matters for future co-operation.

The report on meteorology was given by Mr. E.L.Deacon of the C.S.I.R.O. Meteorological Physics Division and the Bureau delegate raised discussion on the inadequate density and nature of weather reporting and observing stations serving the area, including radar storm detecting and sferics stations. The availability of ships' reports was examined. It was stated that New Caledonia was receiving a good response from Japanese fishing fleets operating in waters south and southeast of the Solomon Islands, although there were some communication difficulties.

It is a matter of great interest that authorities in Noumea were reported to be proceeding with the installation of an automatic weather station at Chesterfield Reef, although there were still some technical difficulties to be surmounted.

Co-ordination of cyclone warnings and areas of responsibility of national services were also brought forward in general discussion.

Another report of meteorological interest was that on "Seasonal Circulation of the Surface Water Masses of the Tasman and Coral Seas" which has obvious application to forecasting and climatology. The state of knowledge is far from complete in this section of oceanography.

Programmes in progress and contemplated were discussed under seven headings. Mr. Deacon's paper on Meteorological Programmes mentioned a study in hand of cyclogenesis near the Australian coast, and also plans for a study of ocean-air interchange phenomena. It was hoped that ships' reports would be available to an increasing degree. The Bureau representative stated that this might result from appointment of a port meteorological officer in Sydney, as contemplated by the Bureau. He referred to the radar and sferic observations and their evaluation, and to the possibility in the future of radio facsimile transmission being further developed. He also reported research investigations on tropical cyclones by the Bureau.

Proposals for the future which came before the Conference included those for joint programmes of research and full exchange of information, and a proposal by the C.S.I.R.O. for the organisation of a joint oceanographic expedition (Tasmapac) possibly in 1961, along similar lines to those already carried out in the North Pacific and Caribbean areas.

The only reference to meteorology was in the suggested oceanographic (Tasmapac) where, inter alia, regular weather reporting was contemplated. The emphasis was mainly on chemistry biology and physics of the ocean.

A suggestion was made at the Conference that the Fisheries Research Vessel "Derwent Water" be equipped and commissioned to take weather observations while at stations away from the coast. Arrangements may be made for this vessel to be used as a source of observation from positions up to the limit of its radio range - about 350 miles.

An impression gained from this Conference was that further progress towards a more complete meteorological service would result from developments in oceanography as fostered by such meetings of interested organisations.