

COMMISSION 38: EXCHANGE OF ASTRONOMERS
(ECHANGE DES ASTRONOMES)

Report of Meetings, 17 and 20 August 1979

PRESIDENT: D. A. MacRae

VICE PRESIDENT: J. Delhaye

Commission 38 differs from others in that it is a Committee of the Executive Committee. However it has the same status and independence as other commissions of the Union. The work of Commission 38 is carried on continuously throughout the period between General Assemblies by the President and Vice-President. They report at intervals to the Organizing Committee and depend on that body for advice and assistance when necessary.

The principal program of Commission 38 is to foster the exchange of astronomers by awarding grants to qualified individuals in order to enable them to make visits to institutions in countries other than their own. It is intended that scientific, intellectual and cultural benefits will accrue and that astronomy in the home country will be enriched after the applicant returns.

Requirements, guidelines and procedures for the operation of the program have been set forth at the Grenoble General Assembly in 1976 (Transactions, XVII, pp. 259-261).

At the first business meeting of the Commission the President tabled copies of three reports (dated 1977 July, 1978 December and 1979 August) which had been presented to the Executive Committee of the Union and to the Organizing Committee. Each report contained details of the awards which had been made to date, supplemented by a listing of applications which, for various reasons, could not be approved. Each report also contained a discussion of the experience gained by the President and Vice-President in their administration of the program.

Approximately half of the 56 applications handled during the three-year period fell within the guidelines; however 13 of these were either still pending, postponed, or withdrawn for other reasons. A total of 15 awards had been made, averaging US \$760. The President emphasized other positive aspects of the exchange of astronomers program, such as influencing host institutions to improve the level of local support, referring applicants to other more appropriate sources, and providing applicants with encouragement and support in seeking help within their own countries. One advantage the IAU program offers is that there is no deadline and no official application form.

As a result of the discussion of the President's report at the second business meeting, it was decided that no basic changes were required in the operating rules of the Commission as formulated at Grenoble. However the new President and Vice-President should feel free to interpret the rules with discretion and to apply them in a flexible manner when they can do so to the benefit of the program. Some minor modifications were proposed to be included in a revised wording. For example it was proposed that study leaves should be among the purposes for which grants could be made, and that visits of two-months duration might be permitted if the circumstances were such that an applicant, perhaps because of teaching duties, could not be away for longer.

An extensive discussion took place of the resolution proposed by the Swedish National Committee (see the Report of Commission 46) and of related topics. It was generally agreed that a program of visits by experienced astronomers to countries with little or no formal astronomy would be beneficial. IAU support for such a program might be channelled through Commission 38, giving it responsibility for organizing the visits, the selection of astronomers, etc., while the host country would be expected to undertake local arrangements. The Commission decided it should co-operate with Commission 46 in its working group on Education of Astronomers from Developing Countries and appointed a small subcommittee from among those present to meet with that working group the following day.

Subject to Executive Committee approval, the officers and the Organizing Committee of Commission 38 for 1979-82 will be as follows:

President: J. Delhaye (France)

Vice-President: F. B. Wood (USA)

Organizing Committee: G. S. Kromov (USSR), D. A. MacRae (Canada), P. M. Routly (USA), J. Sahade (Argentina), F. G. Smith (U.K.), J. Tinbergen (Netherlands), H. H. Voigt (G.F.R.), J. P. Wild (Australia).

The resignation of A. Reiz from the Organizing Committee (he was the second President of the Commission) was accepted with reluctance. The resignation of M. K. V. Bappu from the Organizing Committee was accepted with understanding, but regret. Both remain as members of the Commission. New members of the Organizing Committee, the last three in the above list, were added in order to broaden its geographical representation. The following were appointed as new members of Commission 38: G. Godoli (Italy), K. C. Leung (USA), E. A. Müller (Switzerland), and E. V. P. Smith (USA).

The assistance of Dr. Edith Müller, immediate past General Secretary of the Union, in the work of Commission 38 and the operation of its program is gratefully acknowledged.