

29th. July 1947.

Dear Bonnier,

When you visited me you expressed a wish to know more of the International Council of Scientific Unions, with a view to considering the possibility of forming an International Union of Genetics. It appears from the statutes that the International Council consists of a national scientific organisation from each country which has adhered, and of the international unions.

A country may join the International Council either through its principal academy or national research council, or some other national institution or association, or, finally, through its government. I presume that Sweden, like this country, has already joined the International Council.

The Year Book for 1946 lists seven international unions dealing with 1) Astronomy, 2) Geodesy and Geophysics, 3) Chemistry, 4) Scientific Radio, 5) Pure and Applied Physics, 6) Geography, and 7) Biological Sciences. There is a report for the period 1937-46 for this last union, but, of course, it has been almost inactive. Professor Munro Fox and Dr. Sirks of Holland are evidently doing their best to revive it.

For myself I feel rather strongly that the biological sciences would be wise to follow the example of the non-biological sciences, who have had a longer experience of international cooperation, by

forming separate unions for branches of study requiring separate knowledge and experience, as it is obvious that Genetics does among the biological sciences, and I think the same is true of Physiology, Taxonomy, Ecology, etc. At least, in forming an independent international union adherent to the International Council and through it to the national academies of the adhering nations, we should know where we were and by whom we should be represented in any matter involving international cooperation, of which the most obvious is the holding of conferences, as we have done regularly in peace time through our own International Committee. I believe, also, that genuine international cooperation in the interchange of genetic material could usefully be discussed and regularised through such a body, which we would not wish to be preoccupied or obsessed by international negotiations in respect of taxonomic nomenclature or the many other matters with which an international union of biological sciences, if it were to live up to its name, would have to deal.

This is particularly the case since it is in the biological sciences that the contrast is somewhat sharp between those who get the work done and make effective advances of knowledge possible, and those who talk largely about it at second hand and sometimes without full understanding.

In practice, an international union implies the existence of national committees appointed ~~and~~^{or} approved by the national

academy for the country in question, which committees perform the functions of liaison between the country concerned and the union. Such committees appoint delegates as representatives at the assemblies of the union and have the right to raise questions relevant to international cooperation in their appropriate subject.

The assemblies of the union normally, I suppose, take place on the occasions of international congresses, though practice may differ in the different unions. These assemblies ordinarily appoint commissions for the study or discussion of special questions in the interim between assemblies.

I have no doubt that the International ~~Council~~ would *at once* provide ~~draft~~ statutes for discussion prior to the adoption of definitive statutes, on application for adherence to the International Council. The ~~Appendix of the~~ 1946 Year Book contains the statutes of the existing unions, which are very similar in form, as Appendix IX. It is to be presumed that the creation of an international union with adherence to the International Council will greatly facilitate the machinery for obtaining subventions, both from national academies and from international organisations.

Probably the above is enough to open the question for discussion in your committee.

Yours sincerely,