

Report on the XIV Congress and General Assembly
of
the International Union of Crystallography,
Perth, Australia,
12th - 20th August, 1987.

Some 31 Canadians participated in the XIV Congress which was attended by just over 1000 crystallographers.

The Opening Ceremony was held in the City of Perth Concert Hall. IUCr President Theo Hahn welcomed the participants; there followed the awards of the Ewald Medals and Prizes to J.M. Cowley and A.F. Moodie. The Bragg Lecture was given by B.W. Matthews on "Crystallography and the Life Sciences" after these presentations.

There were three full sessions of the General Assembly. These meetings were held in the evenings so as not to clash with the scientific meetings of the Congress. At the start of the first session, the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences was admitted as a Category I Adhering Body; South Africa obtained approval to have its category changed from I to II because of the increased growth in crystallography in South Africa.

The financial state of the IUCr appears to be sound at present and no dues increase (from the 890 Swiss Francs per unit category) was sought for the next three years from the Adhering Bodies. Much of the time at the Assemblies was taken up with Reports from the various Union Commissions. The Journals Commission reported on future plans for Acta Crystallographica. The current form will continue for the present, but plans were discussed for some alternative publication routes, including a "rapid" publication scheme. A new Commission on Powder Diffraction was formed (Chairman Ray Young, U.S.A.). The Commission on Crystallographic Studies at Controlled Temperatures and Pressures was disbanded, and consideration was given to the introduction of a "sunset" rule, whereby Commissions which did not provide reports for the General Assembly would be disbanded. A motion that the IUCr consider setting up a Commission on Crystallographic Information to take over the duties of the Commissions on Journals, Structure Reports, and Crystal Data was approved (a working party has since been set up to look into this). A committee was struck to look after the new IUCr - Oxford University Press Book Series.

The Australian delegation informed the Assembly that a new crystallographic organisation had been formed - the Asian Crystallographic Association, and this was given Regional Association with the IUCr.

At the final business meeting, it was confirmed the XV Congress would be held in Bordeaux, France from July 19th to 28th, 1990. By a narrow vote, the Assembly opted to have the the XVI Congress in Beijing, People's Republic of China, in August, 1993 (the other potential host country was the U.S.A.). The Assembly then moved to elect a new slate of officers for the Union. Mario Nardelli (Parma, Italy) was confirmed as the new President of the Union.

My impression of the Scientific Sessions was that they were of high quality, superbly arranged, and magnificently run. The arrangement whereby the mornings were devoted to Main Lectures and Microsymposia, leaving the afternoons free to attend the well laid out Poster Sessions, was very satisfactory. All five students supported by the CNC-IUCr Travel Fund had excellent Posters; these were well received and the recipients of the Awards felt that these had contributed significantly to the progress of their careers. The CNC-IUCr arranged an informal meeting of the Canadian crystallographers who were at Perth; much of the time at that meeting was spent on discussing ways to convince NSERC grants committees that crystallography was well worth funding.

The Australian Organising Committee is to be congratulated for running a very successful Congress. Even the weather was made to order; with the exception of the days of the Opening and Closing ceremonies, the participants were blessed with beautifully warm spring weather at the University of Western Australia campus at Nedlands.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "George Ferguson".

George Ferguson,
Chairman CNC-IUCr
September, 1987