

News of Science

United Nations Radiation Report

The United Nations Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation began a series of meetings at U.N. headquarters on 9 June to review, complete, and approve a comprehensive report to the U.N. General Assembly. The June session of the 15-member committee has before it a working draft of the comprehensive report prepared at the committee's previous session, which ended on 28 February, and further studied by committee members since that date.

The final report, which is expected to be transmitted to U.N. member governments in July, deals with the effects of atomic radiation, including the natural background radiation, artificial radiation from medical applications and other peaceful uses of atomic energy, and fallout resulting from nuclear weapon tests. It is concerned both with the immediate effects on man and his environment and with long-range effects on future generations.

U.S. IGY Meeting

Walter Sullivan of the *New York Times* reported on 1 June that, after turning down a proposal that scientists from the 66 nations taking part in the International Geophysical Year meet in this country, the State Department is understood to have changed its policy. A post-IGY assembly will probably be held next year in or near Washington.

Meanwhile, the Soviet Union has invited IGY participants to meet in Moscow in August to prepare the final rules for exchange of data gained from Soviet and American satellites. While East and West have agreed in principle to exchange such data, they must still agree on how detailed the exchange is to be. Some American scientists have felt that the United States missed a valuable opportunity for building prestige when it rejected the original, informal inquiries on whether such a meeting would be welcome here.

Sullivan's report said:

"The chief factor in the State Department's reluctance seems to have been the prospect of having to accept a delegation from Communist China. The latter has

since withdrawn from the IGY in protest at the inclusion of Nationalist China.

"Peiping—and the State Department—were assured by leaders of the IGY that the program was completely non-political. The delegations represent the various national academies of science—not governments.

"State Department sources say, nevertheless, that there is still concern within the department at the prospect that delegations from such unrecognized nations as the Mongolian Peoples Republic and North Korea will wander the streets of Washington.

"Another embarrassment for the State Department is said to result from our diplomats' urging such Chinese Nationalists to apply for visas to Moscow so that the West will be fully represented at the meeting to run there August 1 to 9.

"The Communist bloc has its problems, too. If all IGY participants visit Moscow there will be delegations from North and South Vietnam, East and West Germany, Nationalist China and possibly both North and South Korea.

"The South Koreans recently asked to adhere to the IGY, but since no meeting of the IGY executive body is scheduled before the Moscow meeting, it is doubtful that the application can be accepted before then.

"The enrollment of South Korea would mean that of the four nations partitioned by the cold war, both halves of three would be taking part. The fourth instance—China—underlines an unusual lack of uniformity in Communist bloc policy.

"The Chinese Communists were the first to adhere. When the Nationalists were accepted, to avoid political complications, the two groups were listed in IGY documents as 'Chinese Committee—Peking (Peiping)' and 'Chinese Committee—Taipei.'

"This formula was not acceptable to Peiping, which withdrew on the eve of the IGY. By then Communist China had set in motion an ambitious program which apparently continued with little abatement, despite the withdrawal.

"According to press reports from the Chinese mainland, an oceanographic ship with six laboratories on board was outfitted. The network of fifty weather stations was expanded to 1000. The Aca-

demia Sinica—equivalent to our National Academy of Sciences—announced plans to set up a dozen satellite tracking stations from Tihwa, beyond the Gobi Desert, to the sea.

"It also opened a geophysical observatory in Lhasa, Tibet, and a physics research institute in Tihwa. The Tibetan observatory was opened last July 1, the start of the eighteen-month IGY. Networks of magnetic seismic stations were organized and a latitude observatory was established in Tientsin with Soviet help.

"Reports from the IGY World Data Center in Moscow indicate that it is receiving at least some of the fruits of this Chinese effort. The Soviet press has even spoken of Chinese plans to launch earth satellites without saying when this might be done.

"Apart from Communist China all other Soviet bloc nations except Albania are taking part in the IGY. . . ."

New Species of Wasps

Two new genera and approximately 30 new species of wasps whose eggs are laid inside the bodies of other insects, chiefly caterpillars—and which spend all their larval life feeding on the fats and body fluids of the hosts—are described in a recent Smithsonian Institution bulletin. The author is C. F. W. Muesebeck, honorary collaborator of the Smithsonian Institution.

The wasps, technically of the family Braconidae, are found chiefly in subtropical America. They represent one of the most remarkable adaptations of life in nature.

Eggs are deposited by the females inside the host insects by means of an ovipositor, which penetrates the skin, or even the hard scales of beetles. Inside the host the eggs hatch in an environment of relative safety and abundant food. But the larvae do not feed upon, or injure in any way, any of the vital organs of the host. They eat only fats and body fluids that are not essential to life. The host may continue, to all outward appearances, in relatively good health.

But as soon as the larval stage is completed, the wasps break through the body walls, usually killing the host. Metamorphosis of larvae into four-winged wasps usually takes place in two or three weeks.

Scientific Manpower Office

A special Office of Scientific and Technical Manpower has been set up within the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation to direct the organization's drive for increasing the supply of quali-