

THE INDIAN OCEAN BUBBLE

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A LETTER FROM a Secret Agent: To the Editor:

It will perhaps be useful to your readers and correspondents to have a little more information about the actual organization and recommendations of the SCOR committee. I have obtained this information by devious means. Moreover I am not sure that I know what all the files and papers secretly examined really mean. For example, certain papers have stamped on them in red the inscription: "Secretariat-ne pas dist^{ur}ber au dehors" - which I think means "Do not go around making passes at the secretaries except after hours". It would scarcely have been proper to look further at these papers, but I did find some of a less personal variety, and I pass on the following information gleaned from them:

As you all know, the highest level of all international scientific organizations is ICSU (International Council of Scientific Unions). This outfit established a special Committee on Oceanic Research (SCOR): Chairman, Revelle, vicechairman Deacon, and Secretary, Böhnecke. All countries with oceanographic interests are represented on the committee. Five working groups were formed, consisting of active research workers in particular fields:

- 1/Radioactivity in the Ocean Convener Miyake
 - 2/Carbon Dioxide in Ocean and Atmosphere Convener Rakestraw
 - 3/Measurement of Productivity Convener Marshall
 - 4/Physical properties of sea water Convener Mosby
 - 5/ International Indian Ocean Expeditions Convener Iselin
- And the proposed membership of this last working group was Deacon, Davies, Fisher, Ichiye, Laevastu, Marshall, Pannikar, Rochford, Tchernia, Thompson, Wüst, and Zhukov.

These tidbits of information are from a Draft Report, Sept 26-27, 1958.

EDITORIAL COMMENT: The purpose of the Indian Ocean Bubble is very much more restricted than the purposes of the above committees, and does not, this writer hopes, trespass upon the preserves of any of them. First, it is not international, secondly, it covers only the physical oceanographic aspects of the Indian Ocean, and does not discuss their biology or geology, thirdly, its sole purpose is to serve as a vehicle for discussion, and a stimulant to thinking about the Indian Ocean. The Editor hopes that when a U.S.A. National Committee is eventually formed, that the ideas herein expressed will be of some help to those concerned in formulating final plans for the American participation in the Expeditions.

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A LETTER from Dr. R. B. Montgomery

..... It seems to me desirable that the part of the program concerning the physical properties of the waters be composed of two parts:

(1) Survey, especially to obtain observations where none now exist. Rather than a fine network, I would suggest a very small number of thoughtfully chosen sections. M. Pollak's advice is desirable on account of his experience in assembling the statistics of properties of the Indian Ocean Water.

(2) Studies, of the sort H. Stommel discusses, concerning special aspects of the circulation. The unique feature of the Indian Ocean is the dominating seasonal change. Current measurements at different seasons in the western boundaries are clearly desirable.

A section along the equator repeated at different seasons seems desirable, to look for the Equatorial Undercurrent and for the longitudinal pressure gradient.

My chief comment is to express the hope that this program can be so designed as to aid directly the development of one or more oceanographic centers in the countries bordering the Indian Ocean. The present oceanographic activity bordering the Indian Ocean is undeveloped in comparison with that bordering the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. Active oceanographic centers on the Indian Ocean are essential for continuing intensive studies.

The program is not a single traverse like those of the DISCOVERY and ALBATROSS but is to extend over one set of the seasons at least. A properly chosen shore base for assembly and analysis of results not only can aid the program but also, of perhaps greater importance in the long view, can contribute to the development of a permanent center for continuing research under the auspices of ~~the Indian Ocean countries~~ one of the Indian Ocean countries. I have no direct acquaintance with Indian Ocean facilities and have no specific suggestions. There is an existing international organization named the Pan Indian Ocean Science Association. Two men in the United States who are familiar with some aspects of Indian Ocean oceanography are E. C. LaFond and Dr. R.W. Fairbridge (Dept of Geology, Columbia Univ.) formerly of Perth, Western Australia. Australia has a capable physical oceanographer in Dr. Klaus Wyrtki who will I believe take a keen interest in the Indian Ocean program. I think Wyrtki and Fairbridge should be included in the distribution list. Cronulla however is much too distant from the Indian Ocean to serve as a suitable base for coordinating activities in that ocean.

P.S. In case anyone should think of a use for them, I have a set of noon temperatures of water, air, and wet bulb made from a passenger vessel from Singapore to Suez in December 1958... R.B.M.
