

PART III
RAPPORTS ET COMPTES RENDUS

3. COMMISSION DES NOTATIONS, DES UNITES ET DE L'ECONOMIE DES PUBLICATIONS

PRÉSIDENT INTÉRIMAIRE: B. STRÖMGREN, *Director of the University Observatory, Copenhagen, Denmark.*

MEMBRES: MM. Bosler, Chant, Horn d'Arturo, McCrea, Shaw.

At the Stockholm meeting of I.A.U. in 1938 the General Assembly at the recommendation of Commission 3 adopted a list of notations proposed by the Commission. The list was published in the *Transactions* of the I.A.U., 6, 345-55, 1938.

It would appear desirable now to reconsider the list, and the problem of standardization of astronomical notation.

A survey of astronomical papers and publications that have appeared after the adoption of the list of notations, with a view to determining to what extent standardization has been achieved, might be useful as a guide to future work of the Commission in this field.

Renewed discussion by the Commission of the following three general questions would seem of importance:

1. To what extent does it appear desirable that notation in the various branches of astronomy be standardized?
2. How should a revised list of notation covering the fields for which unification is desirable be worked out?
3. How could actual standardization of the notation used in astronomical publications best be obtained?

B. STRÖMGREN
Acting President of the Commission

Report of Meetings

ACTING PRESIDENT: Prof. B. STRÖMGREN.

SECRETARY: Prof. W. H. MCCREA.

The Commission held two meetings and adopted the draft report. The Commission heard a summary of the view of the International Geodetic Union presented by M. P. Tardi, President of the Union's Commission on Notations, and noted with satisfaction that the Union has adopted part of the I.A.U. list of notations.

In the discussion of the Draft Report it was agreed that the object of the Commission's work on standardization of notation is not to interfere with the liberty of authors but to help authors, when preparing their work for publication, by providing them with a comprehensive list of approved notations. Several speakers pointed out, however, that the existence of the I.A.U. list is not well known and also that it is not easily accessible to authors in a convenient format. The Commission resolved therefore to recommend to the Executive Committee the distribution, in adequate numbers, of reprints of the list. The Commission believes also that, by thus making authors more familiar with the list, its revision from time to time will become more practicable and also more effective.

The discussion concerned itself also with the scope and methods to be adopted by the Commission in reconsidering the existing list during the interval before the next General Assembly of the Union. The Commission took note of a number of particular suggestions to which it agreed to give sympathetic consideration in its work. Among these was a suggestion by Prof. E. Hertzsprung that an agreed abbreviation for the name of any particular observer be fixed for use in *all* lists (double stars, variable stars, etc.) in which such an abbreviation is required. The Commission agreed to give similar consideration to Dr C. W. Allen's suggested adoption of a term for general astronomical, physical and

mathematical use which will be analogous to the terms *decibel* and *magnitude* but having 10 as the base: the word *dex* is suggested, so that for example 10^{39} would be written 39 dex.

The Commission also endorsed the view of Prof. E. Hertzsprung that authors should state explicitly the meaning of any error quoted, i.e. whether it is the probable error, mean error, etc.

Dr F. Link informed the Commission of plans of the National Observatory, Prague, for publishing lists of astronomical and astrophysical constants. While such lists mainly concern matters outside the scope of Commission 3, it recognizes that they will aid its work by encouraging the use of standard notations.