

High Commissioner's Office,
Cape Town,
11th November 1924

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Dear Mr Spencer Jones,

I have received your letter of the 8th November and the draft report on the proposed formation of a National Committee in Astronomy. The following points have occurred to me:-

Although the Union Government is the adhering organisation in South Africa it has no control over the royal Observatory nor the future American Observatories. In coordinating astronomical work in South Africa is it intended that the South African National Committee should advise the Union Government as regards the union Observatory, and also H.M. Government and the American universities as regards their respective Observatories in South Africa? I take it that any existing cooperation between the union and royal Observatories is more or less unofficial. Does the royal Observatory now come under the purview of the English National Committee? It seems that the South African Committee should be on a geographical rather than on a political basis and should have power to support an application to H.M. Government by H.M. Astronomer for assistance in any international project. Thus any suggestions for cooperation or effort in any particular direction put forward by one of the Observatories in South Africa would, if accepted by the National Committee, be brought to the notice of the Governing Authorities of the four Observatories for favourable consideration.

I agree that H.M. Astronomer should be a member of the Committee ex-officio, and I suggest that the American Observatories in South Africa should each send a representative. If any of the South African universities are interested in astronomy (cf. the Transvaal University College, who I believe have a telescope and possibly a class in astronomy) they might also be represented by a common delegate.

Yours sincerely,

delegate.

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J. E. Houghton