

The International Astronomical Union was founded with the following objects: as stated in the Statutes of Convention of the Union:-

- (1) To facilitate the relations between Astronomers of different countries whose international co-operation is necessary or useful.
- (2) To promote the study of astronomy in all its departments

South Africa became a member of the Union in 1922, the adhering organisation being the Union Government. The adhering organisation in any country belonging to the Union is responsible for the payment of the contribution due from that country towards the expenses of the Union - for publications, forwarding international projects etc.

The statutes of the Union provide that a National Committee shall be formed in each of the countries adhering to the Union, such Committee being formed under the responsibility of the principal Academy of the country concerned, or of its National Research Council or of some other national institution or association of institutions or of its government. It should be noted that the Committee need not necessarily be formed under the responsibility of the organisation adhering to the Union in the particular country.

The part assigned to these Committees is (i) the promotion and co-ordination of astronomical work in the respective countries, more especially in relation to their international requirements; (ii) the nomination of Delegates to represent them at the meetings of the Union; (iii) the proposal of questions for discussion by the Union. They are also empowered to propose singly or jointly with other National Committees, questions falling within the purview of the Union, for discussion by the Union.

The formation of a National Committee in Astronomy in South Africa is desirable for the purposes specified above. Two alternatives are open: that the National Committee should be formed under the responsibility of the Royal Society (as the principal Academy in South Africa), or of the Government.

In considering these two alternatives, it should be remembered that the principal Observatory in South Africa is not a Union Government Observatory and further that it is probable that two African Observatories will shortly be established in South Africa. If the National Committee is formed under the responsibility of the Government, there may be objections to those institutions being represented on the Committee, although without them the Committee would fall in its main purpose - the promotion and co-ordination of astronomical work in South Africa.

numerical work in with Africa.

It will therefore seem preferable that the National Committee
should be formed under the responsibility of the Royal Society.
There will be no objection to Mr. J. B. Stewart or any members
of the staff of the Royal Observatory or the American Observatories
signatures of the Committee.