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PROPOSALS TO
Xth INTERNATIONAL BOTANICAL CONGRESS

In TAXON 10(1): 12-13. Jan. 1961, the Editorial Committee of the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature outlined two proposals that it wishes to present to the next Congress. The intent of these proposals is to assure a longer period of use for each edition of the ICBN. The document prepared by the Editorial Committee is herewith reprinted.

The Editorial Committee of the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature wishes to sponsor proposals to the next International Botanical Congress which would have, as their objective, the effect of preventing modification and amendment of the Code at such brief intervals as those between International Botanical Congresses (normally five years). The Committee is convinced that:

(1) The time that normally elapses between the publication of a new edition of the Code and the date for submission of proposals to modify or amend it (presently less than two years) is inadequate. In this period a new edition cannot be satisfactorily used and tested, nor can botanists become familiar with its regulations or its sequences, nor can they adequately compare it with past editions and reflect upon the implications of changes.

(2) The appearance of a new edition of the Code every four or five years, in which the arrangement of Articles is frequently different and the numbering disparate, leads to instability in nomenclatural methods and serves to bring taxonomy into disrepute in the eyes of other scientists.

(3) Procedures presently followed at nomenclature sessions of International Botanical Congresses do not permit sufficient time for the mature assessment of proposals to modify or amend the Code, and hurriedly taken actions often have deplorable results.

(4) As a result of wholesale reference of debatable points to an Editorial Committee, this Committee often has an unwelcome authority to make decisions that effect nomenclatural methods; its work is too demanding to attract the needed concentration and effort from busy and experienced taxonomists.

(5) Alternate International Botanical Congresses could well be used by the Section of Nomenclature to discuss important matters in an unhurried manner, without the stress caused by the need of reaching prompt and binding decisions.

In view of the above considerations, the Editorial Committee intends to present the following proposals to the next International Botanical Congress:

(1) Future International Botanical Congresses should convene a Section of Nomenclature with authority to propose modifications of or amendments to the Preamble and Divisions I and II of the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature no more frequently than at alternate Congresses, unless the interval between two Congresses is at least eight years.

(2) The Section of Nomenclature of the Xth International Botanical Congress will act as a forum on pertinent nomenclatural matters but will not consider modifications of or amendments to the Preamble and Divisions I and II of the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature, except for modifications or amendments

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that might result from consideration of the general problem of the stabilization of specific names, and from the reports of Committees appointed by the IXth International Botanical Congress.

If these proposals should prove acceptable to the Section of Nomenclature of the Xth International Botanical Congress, that Section would be free of the stresses inevitably accompanying legislative recommendations to a Congress. In an atmosphere of relaxation and good will, the Section could:

(a) Hear the reports of Nomenclature Committees and reconstitute these Committees for the next inter-Congress period.

(b) Act upon the recommendations of Nomenclature Committees including those for the conservation of certain family and generic names.

(c) Discuss the "neotype problem" left unsolved at Montreal.

(d) Discuss all aspects of the problem of the stabilization of the specific names of important economic plants, with the background of the anticipated Report from the I.A.P.T. staff on the status of names of plants of major economic importance.

(e) Contemplate at leisure the possible solutions to other problems, with a view to the presentation to a later Congress of nomenclature proposals that would be assured of careful preparation and of the approval of a majority of botanists.

* * *

The Editorial Committee has referred the above argument and proposals to the General Committee on Botanical Nomenclature, requesting that an advisory opinion be obtained from those qualified for a preliminary mail vote under the terms of Division III, Provision 4, of the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature, in the immediate future.

The General Committee on Botanical Nomenclature has now authorized a preliminary mail vote on the two proposals discussed above. With this copy of TAXON are distributed ballots; every individual member of the International Association for Plant Taxonomy is requested to vote on these proposals. This preliminary guiding mail vote (cf. ICBN, Division III, Provision 4) is not binding. Regardless of its results, the proposals will again be put before the Nomenclature Section of the Xth Congress for a final and binding vote.

The results of this preliminary mail vote will be announced in an early number of TAXON. From the vote, those individuals who contemplate making nomenclature proposals to the Xth Congress will be able to estimate the probability of such proposals being presented to the Nomenclature Section for discussion.

The ballots should be returned, if necessary by airmail, by using the enclosed envelope, before 1 July 1963.

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