

## EDITORIAL

It is with great pleasure and a sigh of relief that the editors present to you the Proceedings of the Eighth Biennial Conference held in Hobart in December 1970. Unlike the proceedings of the Seventh Conference, they are not a transcript as it was felt that more effective use could be made of the available space by contributors writing their papers specifically for publication.

We are grateful to all those who contributed to the conference programme and it was a pleasant surprise to find such a large number of really interesting and worthwhile papers presented on a considerable variety of topics. It is also gratifying to record the ready co-operation of many authors in the preparation of their texts for publication. The increasing maturity of Australian speleological activities appears to be reflected in the greater interest taken in scientific, conservation and technical aspects of caves.

We acknowledge the help of a number of individuals in preparing the proceedings for publication. Therese Goede and Jackie Dermody did much re-typing of hand-written and revised articles. We are much indebted to Steve Street who provided the tape recording equipment for the conference activities. Steve Street, Noel White and Therese Goede were also instrumental in helping with the difficult and tedious task of deciphering the discussions that followed most papers and with their conversion to intelligible English. A good deal of editing had to be done but the editors trust that this has not changed the original meaning of any of the questions and answers.

We wish to thank our printers — Advance Publicity and particularly their manager, Mr Chris Wren, and his staff for their assistance in producing a quality publication. We are particularly grateful to the Tasmanian Government for its financial assistance towards the cost of publication. Following an approach made to the Deputy Premier and Chief Secretary of Tasmania, the Hon. K.O. Lyons, a grant of two hundred dollars was made to the Tasmanian Caverneering Club for this purpose. Without this contribution these proceedings would very likely not have seen the light of day. We are also grateful to the Deputy Premier for performing the Official Opening of the Eighth A.S.F. Convention.

It may be of interest here to record some of the problems encountered in producing the proceedings. Much work could be saved in future if *all* contributors submitted a double-spaced, type-written copy of their paper at the time of the conference together with diagrams and photographs suitable for reproduction. Diagrams should be drawn clearly in black ink on white paper with typed or stencilled lettering and photographs should be original prints with a high degree of contrast and definition. Because of poor quality some photographs submitted for the proceedings had to be rejected.

Considerable problems arose because discussions after papers had to be translated from tape. This proved unsatisfactory despite the high quality of the equipment due to varying voice quality and distance from microphone together with frequent interruptions and howls of laughter drowning out witty answers. As most questioners did not identify themselves names are not indicated. At future conferences discussions should be taken down in shorthand.

Finally the Australian Speleological Federation should give some thought to the future production of the conference proceedings. In the introduction of the transcript of proceedings of the Adelaide Conference the then president of A.S.F.—Major R. Webb—stated that:

“It is proposed that in future the host Society appoint a secretary to produce the transcript, hire a professional if necessary, and charge the fees to the Conference. This should ensure that we will not be so dependent upon the goodwill of the energetic few”.

Unfortunately this proposal has the effect—for financial reasons if no other—of lumbering the “energetic few” of the host society (-ies)—who are already doing their share in running the host society (-ies)—not only with organizing a conference and all it entails but also with the tedious job of producing the conference proceedings afterwards. Only in a centre with a large number of clubs, e.g. Sydney, is this difficulty likely to be avoided.

Another problem in producing the proceedings is finance. More by good luck than management and aided by economies made possible by the unexpectedly large attendance was the five dollars per head charged as the actual conference fee available in toto for publication costs to which the generosity of the Tasmanian Government added another two hundred dollars providing a seven hundred dollar fund. This was only marginally sufficient to produce professionally 350 copies of a publication of the standard which you have before you. Future conference committees should also bear in mind the large number of copies—approximately one hundred—that have to be provided gratis to libraries and overseas exchange. Hopefully the one hundred and fifty copies available for sale will create the beginnings of a fund for future proceedings.

However, we suggest that A.S.F. give some consideration not only to the financial problems involved but also to the appointment of a permanent editor of future proceedings provided such a person can be found. Only when these problems are solved can we expect to achieve the regular publication of proceedings of a standard befitting the Australian Speleological Federation.

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The Editors:

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