ASSOCIATION AFFAIRS

Report from the Pan-American Regional Wood Anatomy Conference at Curitiba, Paraná, Brazil

The first international wood anatomy conference ever held on Latin American soil took place at the University of Paraná, Curitiba, Brazil from January 20 through 26, 1985. This meeting, convened by Aracely Vidal Gomes, coincided with the 36th National Botanical Congress of Brazil.

Keeping in mind the large-scale Pacific Regional Wood Anatomy Conference in Tsukuba, Japan, of IAWA and IUFRO Division 5 of only some months ago, and the two other regional meetings ahead of us this year in South Africa and Florida, it could not surprise that the attendance was restricted to not more than 25 participants from 7 countries. Yet this group, often extended by interested plant anatomists whose priorities lay mainly with the lectures of the Botanical Congress, experienced a most stimulating and fruitful scientific and social program which will have its effects on long-term cooperation and exchange of ideas in and beyond Latin America.

At the opening ceremony of the congress, attended by about 800 botanists, our Executive Secretary Ben ter Welle recalled the wood anatomical achievements in Brazil by men like Milanez and Manieri and welcomed the fact that so many young scientists in Latin America, especially Brazil, have taken up the study of pure and applied wood anatomy. Aracely Vidal Gomes welcomed all foreign participants to Curitiba. Among the speakers was also the minister of agriculture of the state of Paraná, who made an ardent plea for a wiser use of nature and the forest resource in Brazil. Pupils of a music college from Curitiba, trained in playing the violin according to Japanese methods, added a cultural flavour to this opening ceremony.

Scientific program and excursions

The wood anatomical program consisted of 6 half-day sessions, a one-day excursion to Paranaguá, and a visit to the wood anatomy teaching and research department of the Federal University of Paraná.

From the papers presented by our Brazilian colleagues it became obvious that the need for fundamental descriptive studies in this country with its vast, but rapidly diminishing area of natural forests is urgently felt. Traditional subjects like microscopic wood identification are of vital importance for wood quality control

and grouping of lesser known species from the rainforests of Amazonia. On the other hand, research needs on introduced fast growing species of *Eucalyptus* and *Pinus* are also addressed, and problems of determining the extent and properties of juvenile wood in 6- to 8-year-old trees are here of paramount importance. In addition subjects of significance to wood science as well as botany like the ontogeny of wood rays, the occurrence of amorphous silica, increment growth rate in tropical species, and the diversity in vessels and vessel-like elements in hardwoods are actively studied.

The excursion by train through the beautiful rainforest of the Serra do Mar with many tree species profusely flowering (notably several *Tibouchina* species) to Paranaguá, a port serving the export of many of Paraná's natural products, offered a welcome change from lectures. Appropriately a stop was made at the village of Morretes, once the residence of the ancestors of Berta Lange de Morretes, the mother of plant anatomy in Brazil, responsible for its flowering period in these decades.

IAWA Business meeting

An IAWA business meeting was conducted on the 23rd of January. Ben ter Welle, our Executive Secretary, first announced the composition of the new IAWA Council (see IAWA Bull. n.s. 6 (1): 42) and expressed his thanks to the parting Council Members, especially to Dr. J. P. Chimelo from Sao Paulo, who had stimulated IAWA affairs on a large scale and had recruited a record number of new members during his term of office. The Pan-American Regional Committee consisting of Prof. Aracely Vidal Gomes, Dr. R. B. Miller and Dr. J. G. Isebrands was re-elected. Possible venues for a future meeting in South America were discussed. Joining forces with the large Latin American Botanical Congress seemed a good option, but it was also suggested to explore possibilities of joining applied wood scientific meetings of IUFRO or other organisations.

Forthcoming meetings in other continents planned in the next three years were reviewed and Ben ter Welle invited all participants to attend an international conference on tropical botany to be held in Utrecht in 1986 on the occasion of the 350th anniversary of Utrecht University.

Impressions of the Wood Anatomy Conference in Curitiba. — 1. Some of the participants in front of the Forestry School. — 2. Dr. Bosshard thanking Aracely Vidal Gomes on behalf of all participants. — 3. The latter thanking all participants. — 4. Ben ter Welle and Berta Lange de Morretes discussing wood anatomy.

The state of affairs of the IAWA Bulletin was discussed. The more critical attitude towards submitted manuscripts and the refereeing system were explained. IAWA members were urged to make more use of the Wood Anatomy News columns for requests and news items. Manuscripts on all aspects of wood structure, especially on structure-property relationships were solicited. Linguistic shortcomings will never be a reason for rejecting a paper. The flourishing state of affairs of both the IAWA Bulletin and IAWA as a whole can still largely be attributed to the support received from the institutes housing the editorial and executive offices, and especially to our lay-out editor Emmy van Nieuwkoop.

During question time, Dr. Bosshard suggested the preparation of an updated Multilingual Glossary of Terms used in Wood Anatomy. It was decided to re-open the debate on wood anatomical terms in a special column of the IAWA Bulletin (see Editorial elsewhere in this issue). Furthermore Dr. Essiamah suggested that financial support should be given to members from poor countries for attending IAWA meetings. Ben ter Wille explained that in spite of the present relative wealth of IAWA such support is hardly possible; our association can only sponsor part of the activities for all attendants at wood anatomy meetings on a modest scale. Finally Prof. Gomes suggested that for future accessibility the IAWA Bulletin might be donated to institutional libraries. It was explained that apart from regular subscriptions at the modest price of US\$ 28 per annum, exchange of the IAWA Bulletin against other publications is only possible on a very limited scale.

Before closing the business meeting Ben ter Wille urged all members to make free use of the facilities of IAWA: 'IAWA is yours and at

your service and we will provide any support and help which is within our means!'

Social events

A report of this international wood anatomy meeting without referring to its social activities would be hopelessly incomplete. First of all this conference was unique in that it was marked by Latin-American dancing during most evenings. One should not underestimate the beneficial effects of a good samba on mental fatigue and alcoholic saturation, and it might be good for wood anatomy if this fitness cure would be prescribed at all our future meetings. No wonder that on these occasions as well as during the conference excursion and at the welcoming reception and banquet the social atmosphere was congenial to lay the foundations for lasting friendships. That these in turn will stimulate wood anatomical cooperation is hardly to the point.

The banquet held jointly with the participants of the Botanical Congress took place in a delightfully informal atmosphere. With a minimum of speeches but a large number of prizes to be won with one's entrance ticket number, this event could be truly relaxing. The botanists appeared better at winning than the wood anatomists: only one tanga slip in camouflage colour went to an IAWA member. The others had to content themselves with less materialistic bliss.

Dr. Bosshard aptly conveyed the gratitude we all owed to the convener, Aracely Vidal Gomes, when he offered her a large bouquet of roses and two Swiss kisses after the last wood anatomy session. In return Professor Gomes charmingly dedicated one rose to each participant for her/his share in the success of this meeting.

Pieter Baas