

JOURNAL OF HYDROLOGY

NEW ZEALAND

Published twice annually by the New Zealand Hydrological Society

Volume 10

1971

Number 2

EDITORIAL

THE NEW ZEALAND HYDROLOGICAL SOCIETY

This issue of the Journal marks the completion of 10 years of publishing activity by the Society. A brief recapitulation of the history of the birth and growth of the Society therefore seems fitting here – not merely for the sake of interest, but because there are lessons to be reminded of, and applied, in the future.

Birth

On 25 August 1961, during a seminar at the School of Engineering, University of Auckland, a meeting was convened of the small handful of senior people then actively engaged in hydrology in New Zealand. When that meeting closed, “an association of hydrologists” called the N.Z. Hydrological Society had been born; its membership numbered eight.

At subsequent special meetings on 29 and 30 August 1961, details concerning membership were finalized, and it was decided to publish a newsletter or journal. The new infant, considered to be premature by some otherwise well-wishers, had opened its eyes to the world about it.

Growth

Steps were taken to obtain members. On 9 April 1962 total membership stood at 54, and at 23 May 1962 it totalled 75. A year later it was 123, and at present it numbers 400 people from about 60 countries.

However, numbers of themselves are poor indicators of the viability of an organization. But the fact that in May 1962 the 75 members represented at least eight professional disciplines was very significant. Apart from being a reflection on the early policy

of the Society's founders, this mixed composition has surely been the chief reason for the Society's growth and present vigour. And many more than eight professional and specialist disciplines could be counted among present members.

The Journal

It seems that this was the first Journal of Hydrology on the international scene but, soon after, the North-Holland Publishing Company, Amsterdam, produced one. It then became necessary to have a title reference distinction, so that commencing with Volume 3 this publication became "Journal of Hydrology (New Zealand)".

Volume 3 also marked an even greater change; this was from the low-standard offset printing to letterpress printing on high-quality paper. By this, the editorial concerns for high-quality reproduction of good material and the need to attract interdisciplinary attention were met.

Society policy concerning the need for interdisciplinary interest and activity within its ranks was translated to editorial policy from the start. It was spelled out in 1963 in the Editorial of Volume 2 No. 2, when the Society was likened to "a symbiotic complex in which each personal, and group, contact is of benefit to those concerned", and where "Water is the connecting thread that links the many disciplines . . .". We have heard this concept propounded in many ways, even by non-hydrologists. Perhaps it was best presented by Professor John R. Burton in the Editorial of Volume 9 No. 1, where he stated, *inter alia*, that the science of hydrology provides the common language and understanding which makes interdisciplinary activity in water resources work a practical reality.

Stated simply, editorial policy remains the same to the present; viz, to serve and thereby draw together workers from the many disciplines wherein water plays a part.

Symposia

In general today much effort is being spent in trying to increase knowledge and develop concepts, but it is doubtful if equivalent effort is being widely applied to improving communications – firstly among various disciplines and, secondly, between the science and technology, and the management. Symposia must rank close to the top in importance as a means of communications improvement.

The holding of symposia, at least annually, was part of early Society policy; six have been organized, and there has been participation in at least a further four. For 1972 one is planned on the water resources of New Zealand.

The Future

Back-patting is not intended in any of the foregoing. But a mother would be less than human if some consolation was not derived, and expressed, as her infant waxed healthy. Even so, let it be said aloud that the Society's growth, vigour and current high international standing is largely a consequence of the confidence placed in it by the people of many disciplines who are its members.

Past policies have borne fruit – the science of hydrology has expanded rapidly in New Zealand. The future will see changes of Society control; it is essential that policy does not become a sectional device. If the technical progress likely to be required for the next 10 years is to be achieved we must work closely together, with a strong team spirit, bonded by that essential mineral – water.
