

IMPRESSIONS ON THE IGU REGIONAL CONFERENCE IN NEW ZEALAND¹

by

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INTRODUCTION

The Philippines is a member of the International Geographical Union (IGU) since 1968 with the National Science Development Board as the adhering organization. Congress of this Union have taken place on the average of four-year interval during the hundred year period, most of them in Europe.

The first congress was held in Belgium in 1871 and the last one was the 22nd Congress held in Montreal, Canada on August 9-17, 1972. During this Congress, the assembly voted to hold the Regional Conference in New Zealand in December 1974 and the Congress in Moscow scheduled in August 1976.

NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON GEOGRAPHICAL SCIENCES

As member country of the IGU, the Philippines created the National Committee on Geographical Sciences on March 5, 1968 to act as the national working and advisory body in relation with the functions of the NSDB in the promotion of geographical sciences beside acting as international liaison with the International Geographical Union.

Presently, the National Committee consists of (11) members. Membership in this committee is by government and private agencies or organizations. They are: Bureau of Soils, Commission on Volcanology, National Irrigation Administration, Bureau of Mines, Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), Bureau of Forest Development, National Census and Statistics Office, Department of Agrarian Reform, Bureau of Coast and Geodetic Survey, University of the Philippines, and Philippine Geographical Society.

IGU REGIONAL CONFERENCE

Besides the IGU Congress every four years, the Regional Conferences are held two years after the congress. The last Regional Conference was held in New Zealand at Massey University, Palmerston North on December 4-11, 1974. As Chairman of the NCGS, I represented the Philippines in this conference.

¹ Read before the 25th Anniversary Celebration of the Philippine Geographical Society, December 8, 1975.

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Looking at an Atlas, New Zealand is a slender slanted outline closed to the bottom of the world. It appears small and isolated in the vast Pacific Ocean, astride between the equator and the south pole, yet it is about the same size as Italy, but 3.2 million hectares smaller than the Philippines (NZ 26.8 million hectares, RP 30, million hectares).

POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY OF NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand is a self-governing state, a member of the British Commonwealth. Queen Elizabeth is represented by a Governor General. The Parliament has 87 members elected by the party system. It is composed of 83 European members and 4 Maoris.

The Executive Council consisted of 20 ministers and the Governor General who control 40 government departments. The population and settlement consisted of indigenous people who are Maoris of Polynesian ancestry. The European settlement that settled as early as 1830 are mostly British with Chinese, Hindus, Pacific Islanders, Lebanese and Syrians. Two thirds of the people of New Zealand live in North Island.

Agriculture consisted of 1/3 of the land privately owned and devoted to farming-livestock of sheep, dairy cattle, beef cattle and pigs. The exports are wool, meat, dairy, pulp and paper.

The climate has an annual rainfall of 1,245 mm. compared with the Republic of the Philippines of 2,563 mm. The temperature ranges from 6°-19°C. The temperature in January ranges from 15°-19°C. In the Philippines the temperature ranges from 25°-28°C in January.

The population estimate in 1974 was 3,000,000 while in the Philippines in the same year was 42,000,000.

PHILIPPINE DELEGATION

As Chairman of the NCGS, I represented the Philippines in this Conference. Leaving Manila on December 4 at 10:00 p.m., 1974, I arrived Wellington NZ via Sydney, Australia on December 5 at 4:00 p.m.

The taxi fare from Wellington airport to the Bus Terminal was NZ\$ 2.60 for a distance of about 2.5 km. The bus fare from Wellington Bus Terminal to Massey University, Palmerston North, a distance of 125 km, was NZ\$2.50.

1. Sponsors of the Conference — The Royal Society of New Zealand in cooperation with the New Zealand Geographical Society, Inc.
2. There were 515 delegates and participants from the countries bordering the Pacific Ocean, Europe, India, Africa, Thailand, Indonesia, Burma, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Philippines.

The Conference:

1. Generally, most international conferences are well and properly planned. So except for minor deficiencies the delegates are always satisfied of the facilities and programs implementation.

2. In the International Geographical Congress, there are four years of preparation because decisions as to the next congress site and assembly is decided during the assembly. The Regional Conference has two years preparation because the same is also decided during the congress and assembly. All member countries with official delegates vote in the assembly and can also propose to host the Congress or the Regional Conference. Since New Zealand hosted last year in the Pacific Area, it will take a couple of years before a conference can be held again in the Pacific Region. So the next chance for the Philippines to host will be the IGU Congress which will be the 24th Congress in 1980.
3. Accommodation of Delegates
 - (1) The conference was held at the Massey University Campus about 2 1/2 km. away of Palmerston North town. Since December is summer vacation, the students are away and the hostels were available to the delegates.
 - (2) The hostels are so constructed to conform with the rural scenery and landscape. The buildings are group of six called court, a building of three floors and six rooms a floor, one room for one student.
 - (3) I was assigned to the *Rotary Court* and occupied the ground floor. It seems that the building is so designed to program the students to be self-reliant. Each floor is provided with both toilet and washing tube to wash clothes. At the corridor is an ironing board and electric iron to press the clothes. We did our washing during the seven days we were there.
4. Conference Sessions
 - (1) There were 5 major sections of the conference, namely:
 - a. Social Problems
 - b. Natural environment, human impact and perception
 - c. Land resources and economic development
 - d. City and village
 - e. Teaching and task of geography
 - (2) There were 173 abstracts of papers printed at the time of the conference. There were a number of papers read that interested me, some of them are:
 - a. Systems approach to curriculum development in geography by Biddy of Sydney Teachers College, Australia.
 - b. Remote sensing application in New Zealand forest resources evaluation — by Cochrane of University of Auckland.
 - c. Urban Spatial decision making: A Wellington Case Study by Enright of Canberra College.
 - d. Environment by Gharing, University of Mysore, India.
 - e. Transport strategies in Regional Development project; Case Study of West Malaysia by Leibach of University of Vermont, Burlington.

(3) Study Tour on Urban-Rural Geography

- a. On December 8, 1974 (Sunday) the papers scheduled for the conference were on Population Geography. In the teaching of Economic Geography, the course usually includes a chapter on Population and Settlement. I was very much interested to attend the session but the Rural-Urban Tour-Study was scheduled on the same day. The tour covered the region from Palmerston North to Wellington with the distance of 125 km. The area is both an urban and rural scenery while Wellington is presently thickly populated. The towns between Palmerston and Wellington are purely rural. Agriculture industry such as sheep, dairy and beef dominated the area. The landscape was beautiful in the summer month in contrast to the highly populated Wellington and vicinities.

(4) The Great outdoor is the laboratory of Geography

- a. The IGU Conference in New Zealand particularly the Tours showed that to study Geography you have to go out in the open and feel the elements of the human habitat, namely — atmosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere and the biosphere. To study urban or rural settlement and plan for the development nothing more is appropriate for any planner than to be knowledgeable of the various geographic realities. My attendance to this Regional Conference was very fruitful.
- b. We in the NCGS hope that in the forthcoming 23rd IGU Congress in Moscow in August 1976, the Philippines should send more than one delegate to represent the country. With the permission of the NSDB and the Department of Tourism we can bid to host for the next Regional Conference in 1978 or the 24th Congress in 1980. It was indicated that the 23rd IGU Congress in Moscow in August 1976 will have an estimated 5,000 delegates and participants.

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NSDB TECHNOLOGY JOURNAL, VOLUME I, NO. 1, JANUARY-MARCH 1976 — a quarterly organ for Philippine Technological Researchers has just come out of the press.

It is published quarterly for NSDB organic and attached agencies including NSDB Assisted-Projects with office at FORPRIDECOM, College, Laguna 3720, Philippines.

Annual subscription is P20.00 in the Philippines, P5.00 single copy. Foreign rate is US\$15.00 a year, postage included.

This is IT, the Scientific and Technological Community has been waiting for a long time. 1976 must be the year for Science and Technology.

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