

24th March, 1952.

My dear Fox,

Thanks for your letter of March 19th. We receive "Resumptio" at this department, but I do not think it is seriously of any use. On the whole abstracting gains by being centralised as in "Biological Abstracts" rather than specialised, though in neither case is the service very quick.

Perhaps I ought to add a few words on the subject of our discussion on the IUBS, since you and the Bureau have invited proposals. I do not believe that any policy could be more stupid and self destructive than that of claiming for the Union a monopoly of international activity in the biological field. Indeed, it is obvious that such a claim is already breaking down. Even without the formation of Physiological and Biochemical Unions such a policy is saking for continuous and fractious disagreement between different sections of the existing Union. What I suggest as an alternative is that the Union should very seriously consider the policy of making it a principal aim to plan and form, over the next ten or fifteen years, a succession of more specialised unions by common consent, rather than by individual, and therefore to some extent, hostile action.

The immediate difficulty to the formation of biological unions (apart from the existence of the IUBS) is that

International Academies might fear that the proliferation of unions would be an endless process. It is exactly that fear which the IUBS, if it were to adopt the policy I suggest, would be able to assuage by pointing to a specific programme, building up something like a dozen biological unions covering, so far as is possible, the more important parts of the biological field. I, and a good many others, find it very disturbing that the opinion should be held among IUBS promoters that a single Biological Union could suffice for all the biological sciences.

Yours sincerely,