The First Plenary Assembly of the CCITT

(Geneva, 15-20 December, 1956)

by J. ROUVIÈRE

(Translation)

The First Plenary Assembly of the International Telegraph and Telephone Consultative Committee was held in Geneva, from 15 to 20 December, 1956, immediately after the end of the VIIIth Plenary Assembly of the CCIT and the XVIIIth Plenary Assembly of the CCIF.

Participation

Forty-six countries were represented, three of them represented by recognized private operating agencies (Chile, Cuba, Mexico).

Administrations of ITU Members :

Argentine Republic, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bielorussia, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Ethiopia, France, Germany (Federal Republic), India, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Laos, Lebanon, Liberia, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Overseas Territories of the French Republic, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Roumania, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, USSR, Viet-Nam, Yugoslavia.

Recognized private operating agencies :

American Cable and Radio Corporation, American Telephone and Telegraph Company, Chile Telephone Company, Compagnie française de câbles sous-marins, Compagnie générale de TSF, Companhia Portuguesa Radio Marconi, Compañía Telefónica Nacional de España, Cuban Telephone Company, Deutsch-Atlantische Telegraphengesellschaft, Great Northern Telegraph Company, Italcable, Radio Austria, RCA Communications, Teléfonos de México, Telephone Association of Canada.

The opening meeting

Mr. van der Toorn, Director-General of Telecommunications in the Netherlands Administration and Head of the Netherlands Delegation (*see photograph in the French part, page 174*f), was elected Chairman. Mr. Nesbitt (United States of America) and Mr. Afanassief (Bielorussia) were elected Vice-Chairmen.

Dr. M. A. Andrada (Secretary-General of the Union), opening the Assembly, recalled the circumstances in which amalgamation of the CCIT and CCIF had been decided on, and commented as follows on future prospects :

" The birth of the new International Telegraph and Telephone Consultative Committee, marked by the opening of this first Plenary Assembly, will be a milestone in the history of the Union.

You are all aware that although the CCIT and CCIF were magnificently well adapted to a major phase in the development of international telegraphy and telephony, the differences between the engineering procedures peculiar to these two branches of telecommunication have been becoming ever less clearly defined, and this had led to complications. And for a variety of reasons—historical, geographical, technical and economic—there were appreciable differences in the constitutions and operating methods of these two praiseworthy organizations.

The idea of a merger of the two was first seriously mooted ten years or so ago. The question was on the agenda of the Plenipotentiary Conference which met in Buenos Aires in 1952. After lengthy deliberation, that Conference, in its Protocol II, defined the ways and means of amalgamation. You all know what action was taken on Buenos Aires Protocol II. You know that the Telegraph and Telephone Conference having been postponed, it was the Administrative Council which, at its 1955 session, recommended Members of the Union to effect this amalgamation as from 1 January, 1957.

I shall not here go into the arguments invoked for or against in recent years. By deciding in favour of amalgamation, the majority of Union Members most certainly acted in the higher interests of the Union, and more especially, in the interests of telegraphy and telephony.

. . . .

Secondly, I would mention the interest displayed in the new CCITT by ITU Administrations. As you know, forty-nine Administrations and eighteen recognized private operating agencies have already announced their wish to participate. Hence the new body promises to be practically world-wide in scope. I think we are justified in explaining this state of affairs by the general tendency to ever closer international cooperation. But we may, I feel, legitimately assume that the increased activities of this new body will redound to the advantage of all countries, no matter what sort of telecommunication networks they may have or how far those networks have developed. This brings me, by a natural transition, to what is known as Technical Assistance, a form of international cooperation which has been greatly extended these last few years. The matter is one which appears on your agenda.

. . . .

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, there is one wish to which I must, I think, give expression, namely, that the International Telegraph and Telephone Consultative Committee should be as successful as its two predecessors, the CCIT and the CCIF. And when I say successful, by that I mean ever more efficient, because the advocates of amalgamation felt that a combination of the two CCIs would produce results over and above those that might have been attained

by a mere addition of the continuous activities hitherto carried on almost independently by telegraph specialists, on the one hand, and by telephone experts, on the other.

On the purely human level, I cannot help feeling that nothing but good can come of the amalgamation. By bringing the telegraph and telephone experts together in a common cause, it cannot but lead to better mutual understanding and more fruitful personal contacts. In fact the atmosphere prevailing here and now encourages me to say that ' amalgamation ' exists already in intention and in spirit. This augurs very well indeed for the future of the new CCITT."

Abbreviation adopted to designate the International Telegraph and Telephone Consultative Committee (CCITT)

At its meeting on 18 December, 1956, the Assembly decided that " CCIT " was an undesirable abbreviation to use to designate the new body, since confusion would inevitably arise with the old International Telegraph Consultative Committee. Hence it decided in favour of using the abbreviation " CCITT."

The abbreviation in question will be used provisionally, pending such time as the next Plenipotentiary Conference formally authorizes it by making the requisite changes in the Convention.

Election of the Director

At its first meeting, on 15 December, 1956, the Assembly set up an Election Committee under Mr. Sterky (Head of the Swedish Delegation). The committee was to check that the applications submitted were valid and to draw up a list of the delegations entitled to vote under the International Telecommunication Convention.

Applications had been received from the following five gentlemen :

Mr. B. R. Batra, proposed by the Indian Administration

Mr. J. Besseyre, an ITU official

Mr. H. Laursen, proposed by the Danish Administration

Mr. M. N. Mirza, proposed by the Administration of Pakistan, and

Mr. J. Rouvière, proposed by the French Administration.

There were forty-three delegations entitled to vote (forty-four from the second ballot onwards). The election took place at the plenary meetings held on 18 and 19 December, 1956, and at the fourth ballot, the candidate sponsored by the French Administration was elected by an absolute majority.

Organization of the CCITT

The Assembly defined how the CCITT was to be organized during the period 1957 to 1960, i.e., in essence, what study groups and sub-study groups there should be, with their terms of reference. This work of organization had been prepared beforehand by a meeting of CCIT and CCIF Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen (Geneva, 29 February to 8 March, 1956). Immediately before the Plenary Assembly opened, there were three preliminary meetings of heads of delegations, and there was a considerable discussion on the proposals submitted by the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen.

It was not too easy to decide what study groups should be set up, or how to strike a balance between opposing requirements.

Some Administrations, in which there exists a rigorous specialization of activities, were against study groups with too extensive terms of reference, on the grounds that specialists in particular questions would not be interested in a good many of the items on the study group's agenda, but would nevertheless be obliged to attend. Such a course, they considered, would be costly for Administrations.

On the other hand, other Administrations there were which felt they could not, or did not want to, send more than a very few persons to attend CCI meetings. They were in favour of apportioning the questions for study among fewer study groups.

This is merely one example of the diametrically opposed views that had to be reconciled. It required careful study, too, before telegraph and telephone specialists, experts in the same fields : transmission, operations, etc., could be regrouped into the same study group. The solutions arrived at were not uniform.

As a result of the discussions at the preliminary meetings of heads of delegations, a plan for the apportionment of the activities of the old CCIF and CCIT Study Groups among twelve new study groups and a number of sub-study groups was submitted to the Assembly. After some slight amendments, this plan was unanimously adopted. (See figure 1.) The questions which the CCIT VIIIth Plenary Assembly and the CCIF XVIIIth Plenary Assembly had decided to set for study were then apportioned among the study groups just set up.

A diagram showing the form of organization adopted, together with the names of the study group Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen designated, is given hereinafter. (See figure 2)

There are two points in this diagram which deserve mention :

a) Activities in connection with transmission questions, i.e., those problems which before amalgamation had mostly been studied by CCIF Study Group 3, were distributed among a group of sub-study groups (1/1, 1/2, 1/3, 1/4) ;

b) All activities concerning operations and rates were regrouped in a single family of sub-study groups (2/1, 2/2, 2/3, and 2/4). Before amalgamation, Study Group 6, Study Group 7, the Sub-Committee on Rapid Operating Methods and the

Fig. 1

CCIF Committee on Revision of International Tariffs dealt with these matters for telephony, while Study Groups VIII, IX, X, and XI of the CCIT were responsible for the telegraph aspect. In the CCITT, a new study group, Study Group 2, with entirely new terms of reference, will have to ensure the coordination of the work done by the four Sub-Study Groups 2/1, 2/2, 2/3, and 2/4, and provide a similar general course of conduct for both telegraphy and telephony, as regards the operating and tariff aspects.

Incidentally, it will be observed that the study groups are designated by numbers, and not by letters, as had been proposed in several of the projects submitted to the Assembly. The use of letters leads to difficulties. Alphabets differ from country to country, and the same letters are differently pronounced. Nor did the Assembly accept the proposal made, to the effect that the study groups should be designated by roman figures. Arabic figures will be used.

The Assembly felt that the numbering of study groups should mark a complete break with the system existing in the CCIT and CCIF, although this latter system was familiar to all. This complete break was designed to eliminate all confusion, and to avoid anybody being offended at the sight of a number formerly used by the CCIT or CCIF being preferred.
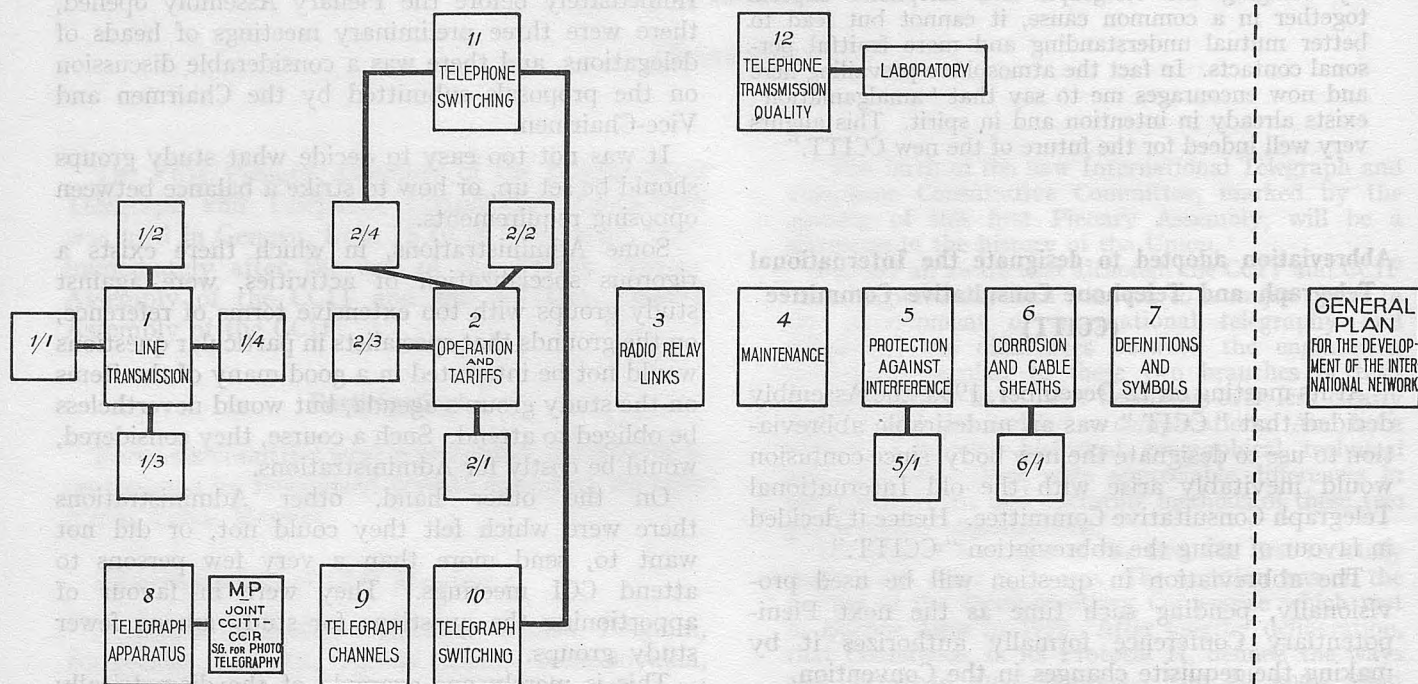
CCITT working procedures

The February meeting of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen had made a meticulous study of the working procedures in force in the CCIT and CCIF, and made recommendations for the benefit of the CCITT.

There were close analogies, in regard to many points, between the CCIT and the CCIF working procedures. The main differences concerned more especially :

a) the parts played by the Chairmen and the specialized secretariat ;

b) the production and circulation of documents (languages used, despatch procedure, etc.).

The conclusions reached by the February meeting in connection with :

the parts played by the Chairmen ;

the preparation of programmes for meetings ;

the production of documents for meetings ;

interpretation during meetings ;

the lay-out of CCITT recommendations

were adopted by the Assembly and set forth in the form of rules of procedure. Very generally speaking, the chief differences in relation to the state of affairs prevailing in the CCIT and CCIF can be summed up

ORGANIZATION OF THE C.C.I.T.T.
STUDY GROUPS AND SUB-STUDY GROUPS
Partial Plan N°1

12 — TELEPHONE TRANSMISSION PERFORMANCE AND LOCAL TELEPHONE NETWORKS
Mr. Swedenborg / Mr. Kroutl

LABORATORY

1/2 — USE OF LINES FOR TELEPHONY
Mr. Franklin / Mr. Claeys

1/1 — SPECIFICATION OF TRUNK LINES
Mr. Sueur / Mr. Jacot

1 — COORDINATION OF STUDIES OF LINE TRANSMISSION AND GENERAL TRANSMISSION PROBLEMS
Mr. Bast / Mr. Franklin

1/4 — USE OF INTERNATIONAL LINES FOR PROGRAM AND TELEVISION
Mr. Müller / Mr. Lewis

3 — INTRODUCTION OF RADIO RELAY LINKS INTO THE GENERAL LINE TELECOMMUNICATION NETWORK. LINKING-UP OF RADIO CIRCUITS TO THE GENERAL NETWORK
Mr. Gori / Mr. Borodifch

4 — MAINTENANCE OF THE GENERAL TELECOMMUNICATION NETWORK
Mr. Valloton / Mr. Billen

1/3 — USE OF INTERNATIONAL LINES FOR TELEGRAPHY
Mr. Bassole / Mr. Fjalkowski

9 — TELEGRAPH TRANSMISSION PERFORMANCE. SPECIFICATION OF EQUIPMENT AND DIRECTIVES FOR MAINTENANCE OF TELEGRAPH CHANNELS
Mr. Van Summel / Mr. Roquet

ORGANIZATION OF THE C.C.I.T.T.
STUDY GROUPS AND SUB-STUDY GROUPS
Partial Plan N°2

11 — TELEPHONE SIGNALLING AND SWITCHING
Mr. Barron / Mr. Jassilieff

2/4 — AUTOMATIC AND SEMI-AUTOMATIC TELEPHONE OPERATION
Mr. Lambiotte / Mr. Chovet

2/2 — TELEPHONE OPERATION AND TARIFFS
Mr. Terras / Mr. Van Dijk

2/3 — COSTING
Mr. Bornemann / Mr. Heimbürger

2 — COORDINATION OF OPERATION AND TARIFFS (INCLUDING COORDINATION OF RULES FOR LEASE OF CIRCUITS AND REGULATION OF PRIVATE NETWORKS)
Mr. Langenberger / Mr. Garrido

2/1 — TELEGRAPH OPERATION AND TARIFFS (INCLUDING TELEX)
Mr. Terry / Mr. Fargues

10 — TELEGRAPH SWITCHING
Mr. Jolley / Mr. Faugeras

ORGANIZATION OF THE C.C.I.T.T.
STUDY GROUPS AND SUB-STUDY GROUPS
Partial Plan N°3

7 — DEFINITIONS, VOCABULARY, SYMBOLS
Mr. Gella / Mr. Bigi

5 — PROTECTION AGAINST DANGERS AND DISTURBANCES OF ELECTRO-MAGNETIC ORIGIN
Mr. Collet / Mr. Mikhailov

5/1 — REVISION OF DIRECTIVES

6 — PROTECTION AND SPECIFICATIONS OF CABLE SHEATHS AND POLES
Mr. Halström / Mr. Gagliardi

6/1 — REVISION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

GENERAL PLAN FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL NETWORK

8 — TELEGRAPH APPARATUS AND LOCAL CONNECTING LINES
Mr. Pellé / Mr. Amarandov

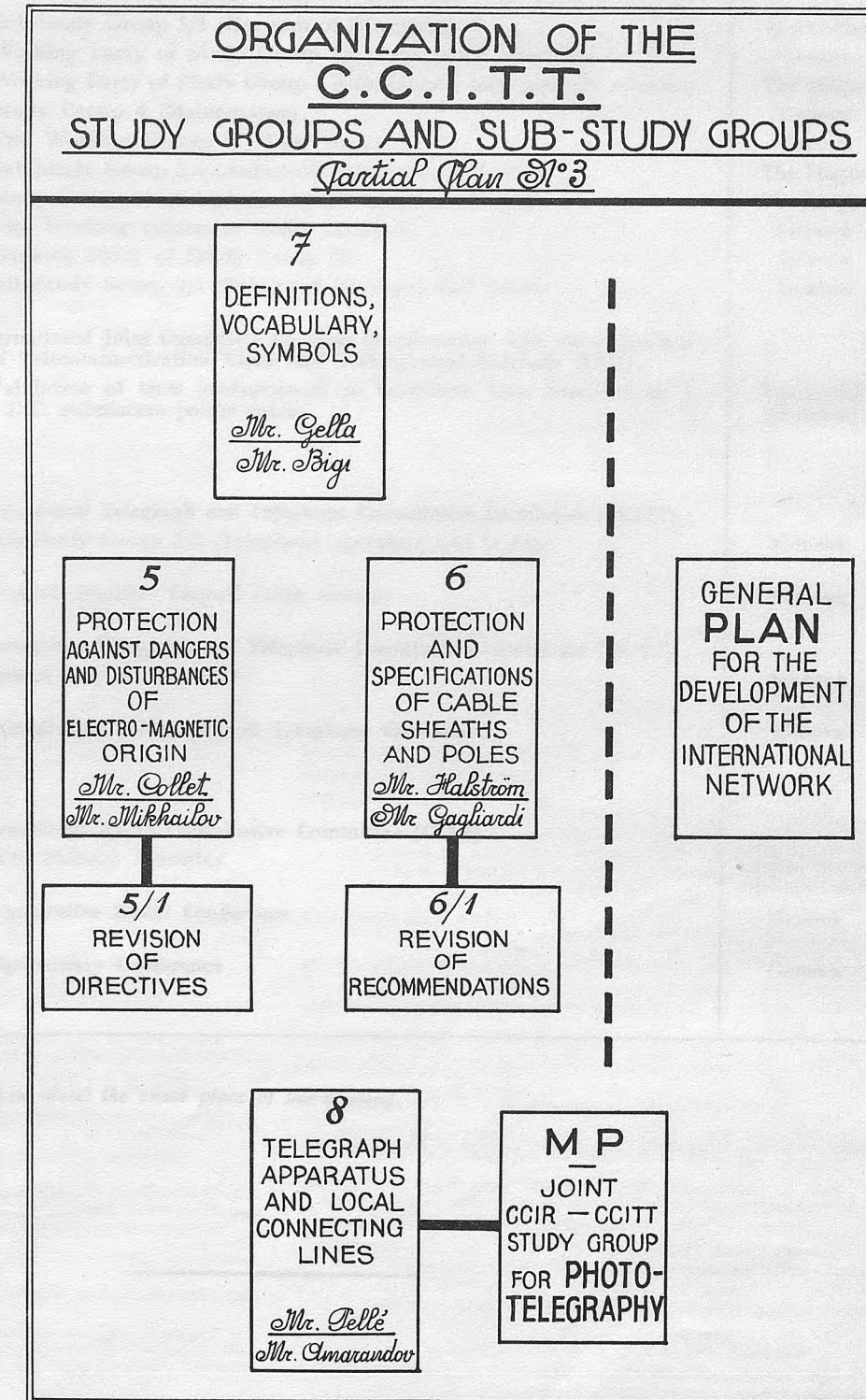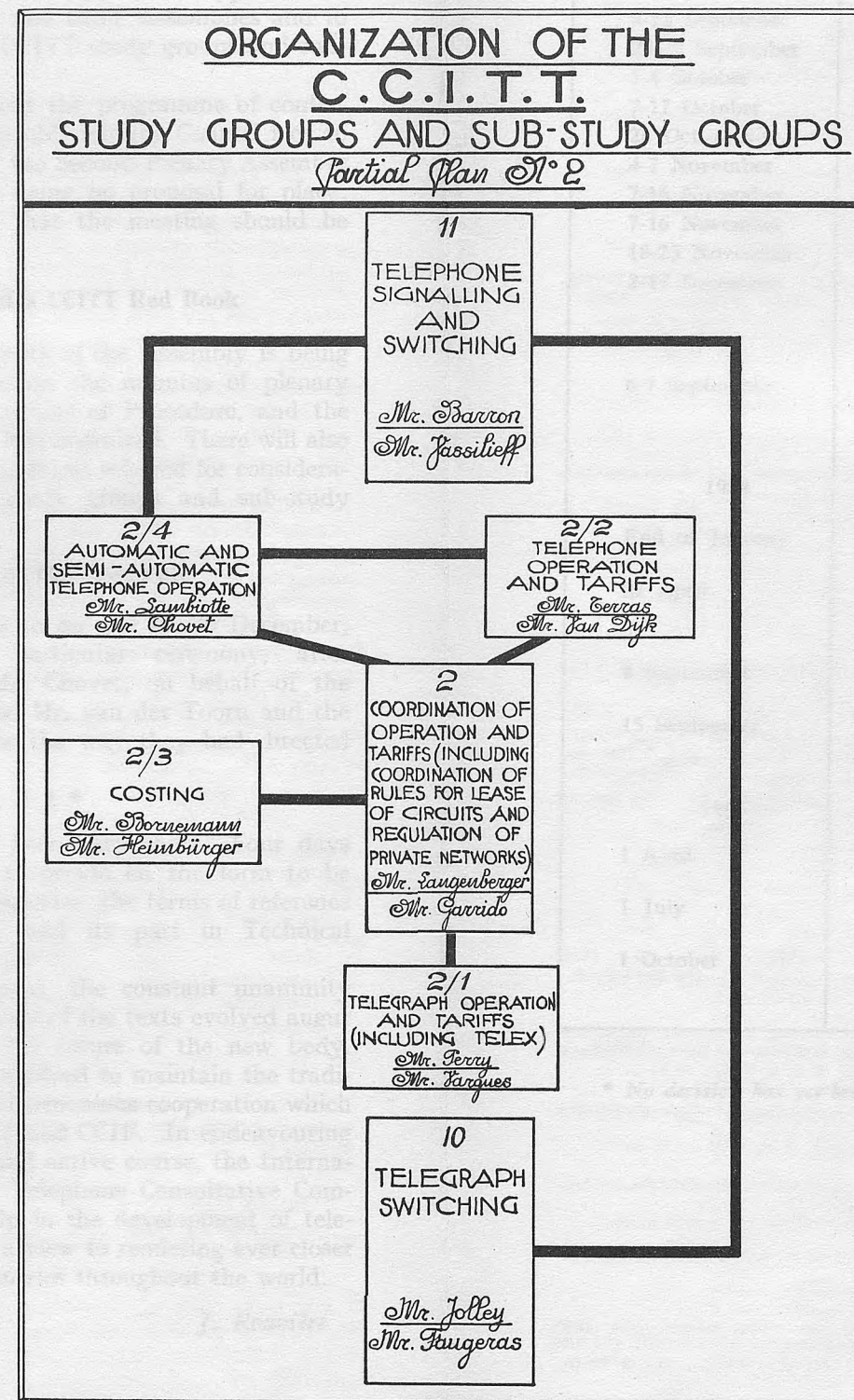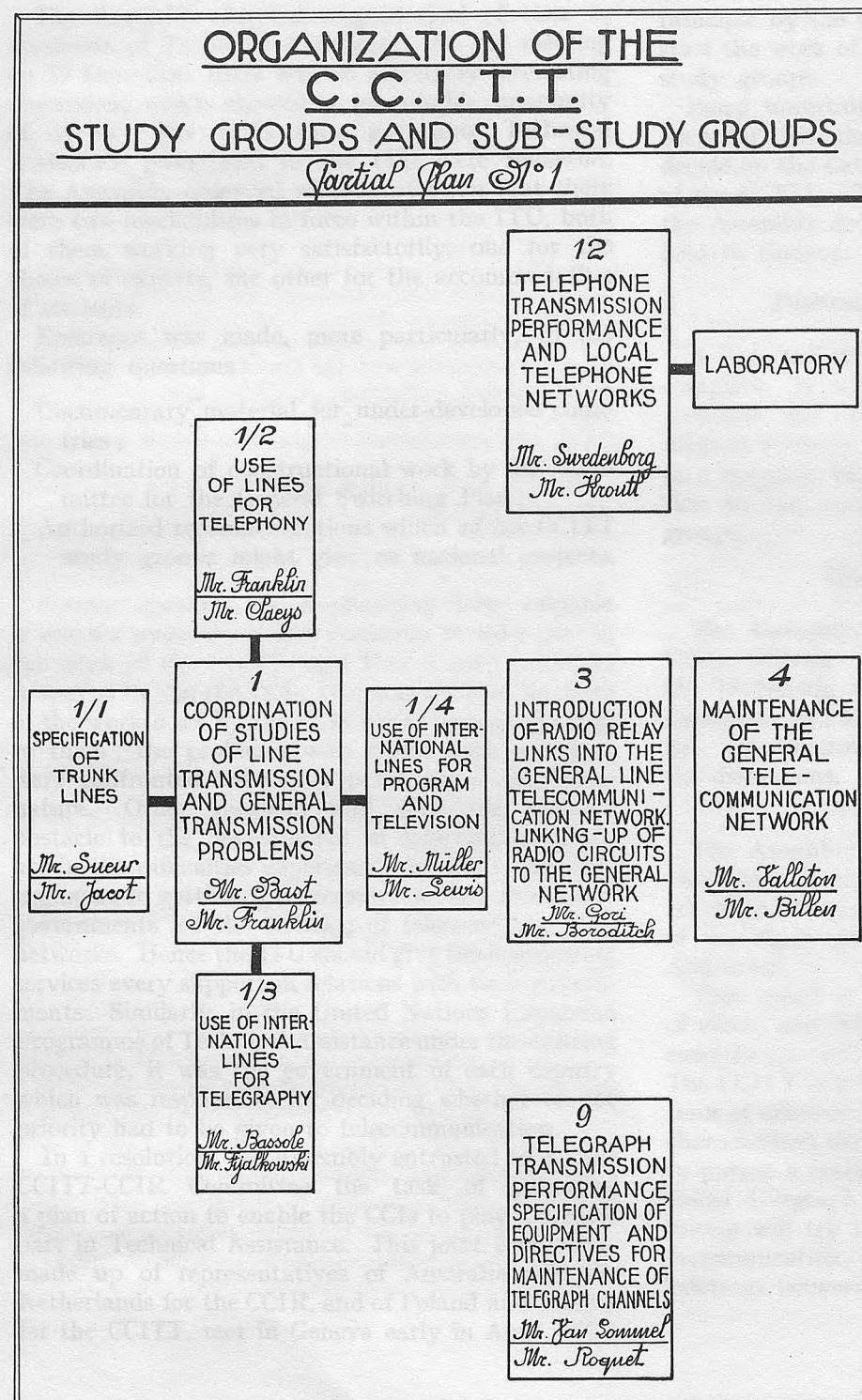**MP** — JOINT CCIR — CCITT STUDY GROUP FOR PHOTO-TELEGRAPHY

Fig. 2

by saying that in the new body the specialized secretariat will play a part very similar to that of the CCIF Secretariat, while as regards languages, the CCIT procedure will be followed.

Technical Assistance

The Assembly devoted a good deal of time to questions of Technical Assistance. At the meeting on 19 December there was an extremely interesting discussion, which showed a remarkable unanimity of views. The rules then governing Technical Assistance procedures in the ITU were reviewed. The Assembly observed with satisfaction that there were two mechanisms in force within the ITU, both of them working very satisfactorily, one for the choice of experts, the other for the accommodation of students.

Reference was made, more particularly, to the following questions :

Documentary material for under-developed countries ;

Coordination of constructional work by the Committee for the General Switching Plan ;

Authorized recommendations which *ad hoc* CCITT study groups might give on national projects.

Certain speakers, in emphasizing how valuable it was for under-developed countries to take part in the work of the CCITT, said that if such countries hesitated to join the CCIs, that was because the level of the work done by the CCIs might appear too high to them ; the problems with which such countries were confronted were of a much more immediate nature. Other speakers said that the greatest obstacle to the development of telecommunication lay in the difficulties experienced by the responsible engineers in getting the necessary money from their governments for the creation of telecommunication networks. Hence the ITU should give the engineering services every support in relations with their governments. Similarly, in the United Nations Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance under the existing procedure, it was the government of each country which was responsible for deciding whether or not priority had to be given to telecommunication.

In a resolution, the Assembly entrusted to a joint CCITT-CCIR Committee the task of proposing a plan of action to enable the CCIs to play a greater part in Technical Assistance. This joint committee, made up of representatives of Australia and the Netherlands for the CCIR, and of Poland and Tunisia for the CCITT, met in Geneva early in April, 1957.

Forthcoming meetings

At the end of the *Journal*, as usual, there is a list of the forthcoming CCITT meetings, as decided upon by the Plenary Assembly.

This list is a long one, because numerous working parties have to meet after the Plenary Assemblies in December, 1956, to devise texts approved in principle by the CCIF and CCIT Assemblies and to start the work of the CCITT study groups and sub-study groups.

Being uncertain about the programme of conferences for 1959, the Assembly left the Council free to decide on the date for the Second Plenary Assembly of the CCITT. There being no proposal for place, the Assembly decided that the meeting should be held in Geneva.

Publication of a CCITT Red Book

A *Red Book* on the work of the Assembly is being compiled. It will contain the minutes of plenary meetings, the CCITT Rules of Procedure, and the diagram showing how it is organized. There will also be a complete list of questions referred for consideration to the various study groups and sub-study groups.

Closing of the Assembly

The Assembly came to an end on 20 December, 1956, without any particular ceremony, after Mr. Wolverson and Mr. Chovet, on behalf of the Assembly, had thanked Mr. van der Toorn and the two Vice-Chairmen for the way they had directed the discussions.

* * *

The Assembly had been very short. Four days only were necessary to decide on the form to be taken by the new Committee, the terms of reference of its study groups, and its part in Technical Assistance.

This speed in decision, the constant unanimity of views, and the brevity of the texts evolved augur exceedingly well for the future of the new body. The CCITT is firmly resolved to maintain the traditions of efficiency and harmonious cooperation which characterized the CCIT and CCIF. In endeavouring to pursue a realistic and active course, the International Telegraph and Telephone Consultative Committee will try to help in the development of telecommunication, with a view to rendering ever closer relations between countries throughout the world.

J. Rouvière