REPORT ON THE ACTIVITY OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON
TAXONOMY OF THE ACTINOMYCETES, 1958-1962

1. An international cooperative experiment has been carried out in which 25 Streptomyces strains from the same culture collection have been examined in 36 different laboratories all over the world. Morphological and cultural characteristics have been observed and recorded under conditions as standardized as possible, to find out how stable these properties are for use as criteria for classification. The results obtained have been published (Intl. Bull. Bact. Nomen. Tax., 11:91-98. 1961).

2. To remove the confusion which arises from a different description of the same culture by different observers, the Subcommittee organized a "Workshop" in Montreal in which the colour of Streptomyces cultures was described using different colour schemes. This session was very successful for the 25 participants agreed to use one of these colour schemes in future.

3. Most of the people working on Streptomycetes consider them as bacteria; however, some regard them as fungi. This means that both the Botanical and the Bacteriological Codes of Nomenclature are used. Twenty-six experts in this field have been asked which Code they prefer. Two-thirds of them favoured the Bacteriological Code. A recommendation has been given to the International Committee (Intl. Bul. Bact. Nom. Tax. 13:175) that the International Code of Nomenclature of Bacteria and Viruses should be the basis for naming new species of following three families of the order Actinomycetales: Actinomycetaceae, Streptomycetaceae, and Actinoplanaceae.

4. A Round Table Conference on Streptomycetes was held on 20th August 1962 (47 participants represented 16 countries). Many problems were discussed, inter alia the introduction of infrageneric taxa, the differentiation between Nocardia and Streptomyces, the basis on which new genera could be introduced, the examination of colour and odour within Streptomycetes, the redescription of type cultures and if necessary the establishment of neotypes, the

influence of different types of agar on the growth of Streptomyces. Models of sporophore structure have been demonstrated. In addition, Prof. L. Silvestri invited any members of the audience who were interested in a statistical study of species characteristics to cooperate with him.

5. Another Round Table Conference on Microaerophilic Actinomycetes (convened by Dr. Slack) was held 22nd August 1962. Problems on the taxonomy of this specific group of organisms were discussed, in particular morphology and some of the important biochemical reactions.

6. Two meetings of the Subcommittee were held during the Congress in Montreal, 8 members of the Subcommittee were present. As a result of the discussions the following recommendations were formulated:

- a) The subcommittee recommends for the Actinomycetales, exclusive of the Mycobacteriaceae, that Patent Offices accept microorganisms for process patents which fit any of the taxa in rules 6, 7, 8 of the International Code of Nomenclature of Bacteria and Viruses;
- b) A minimum of criteria should be used in a description for a patent (Intl. Bull. Bact. Nomen. Tax. 13:169-170, 1963);
- c) The Subcommittee welcomes the new rule of the International Committee that names given in a patent have no value for nomenclature unless this organism is described in a scientific manner in one of the common scientific journals.

Several proposals concerning various problems were discussed and accepted:

- a) A simple reduced Colour Harmony Guide System to be used for description of colours among the Streptomyces;
- b) All the available Type Cultures should be listed and distributed to various laboratories for redescription under standardized conditions. This could be carried out in an international cooperative experiment. If no type cultures are available, neotypes should be established. If type cultures are poorly and insufficiently described and the type cultures no longer in existence, these cultures and their names be considered invalid;

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- c) A Central Type Culture Collection for Streptomyces should be established at Centraalbureau voor Schimmelcultures (CBS) Baarn. This centre will supply Sub-Collections at Washington, Moscow, and Tokyo;
- d) A new species should not only be described in one of the many scientific journals, but also in the International Bulletin of Bacteriological Nomenclature and Taxonomy.

Dr. E. Küster, Secretary
12th September 1962