LIMITATION OF VALIDITY OF PUBLICATION OF
NAMES OF TAXA OF BACTERIA BEFORE 1950

A proposed emendation of Rule 10 in the
International Code of Nomenclature of Bacteria

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A basic criterion for determination of legitimacy and availability of names of taxa in biology is that of priority. The literature of bacteriology in recent years has listed the names of more than 25,000 taxa. The older literature has been surveyed by many authors. Application of the principles and rules of the International Code of Nomenclature of Bacteria and of about 40 Opinions of the Judicial Commission of the International Committee on Nomenclature of Bacteria have resulted in a degree of stabilization. For example, decision by the Commission that the generic name Bacterium be declared illegitimate rejected more than a thousand names of species. The Opinion relative to the circumscription of the genus Bacillus made illegitimate the names of most, not all, species placed in the genus. Monographs of groups of bacteria and Manuals have been published in many languages. As illustration one may cite the manuals of Prévot, Hauduroy, Krasil'nikov, Topley and Wilson, and Bergey's Manual, among many.

In the earlier days of bacterial taxonomy, problems arose due to confusion of bacteria with protozoa, algae, the blue-green algae and the fungi. Dr. Skerman, Chairman of the International Committee on Nomenclature of Bacteria, and Dr. Lessel of the American Type Culture Collection, among others, have expressed concern that older names not now recognized are a source of confusion.

It is proposed that a date be fixed that would reject the acceptance of any name not found in the recent literature of bacteriology. It is further proposed that January 1, 1950 be fixed as the date before which names not recognized since that date shall be designated as not validly published.

Proposed Emendation of Rule 10 of the
International Code of Nomenclature of Bacteria

Rule 10 reads: "Valid publication is treated as beginning for the bacteria with 1 May 1753, the date of publication of Linnaeus' Species Plantarum ed. 1."

Recommended emendation of Rule 10:

Rule 10. Valid publication is treated as beginning for the bacteria with 1 May 1753, the date of publication of Linnaeus' Species Plantarum edition 1. Names of bacterial taxa are not validly published unless they have been recognized or evaluated in the bacteriological literature since 1 January 1950.