You notice I do not call it an International Biological Year, unlike the International Geophysical Year. There are several reasons for this, the principal one being that we are slower than the geophysicists. We expect to spend at least 5 years on this international research program rather than 18 months as the geophysicists did, simply because the problems we are concerned with are so much more complicated, so much more difficult, and so much less understood.

The geophysicists were generally engaged in a straightforward business of making various kinds of measurements. In our case we have to find out what kind of measurements to make. We have to develop similarly, within the United States there is a national committee appointed by President Seitz, the President of the National Academy of Sciences, which is called the U.S. National Committee for the International Biological Program. This committee has selected some hundred scientists, or nearly a hundred scientists to be members of its special subcommittees dealing with different aspects of the program, and they in turn have consulted with and work with some 150 or so other biologists so that at the present time we have a rapidly spreading network of concern and discussion and ideas among American biologists, thinking about what can be done in this International Biological Program.

You notice I do not call it an International Biological Year, unlike the International Geophysical Year. There are two reasons for this, the principal one being that the biologists are slower than the geophysicists. They expect to spend at least 5 years doing this international research program rather than 18 months as the geophysicists did simply because the problems they are concerned with are so much more complicated, so much more difficult, and so much less understood.

The second reason is the geophysicists were generally engaged in a straightforward business of making various kinds of measurements. In this case we have to find out what kind of measurements to make in many cases. We have to develop new methods and new techniques, and we have to train people because the kinds of people, the kinds of scientists who are needed for this program just do not exist in sufficient numbers.

What kind of a program are we talking about? We are talking about those kinds of biology that need to be studied internationally; and we put another limitation on it also: we are concerned primarily with biological problems that can contribute in the near future to human welfare and, in the long run, perhaps to human survival. So we are concerned about such things as food supplies, about the balance between different kinds of organisms in nature, and about the whole structure of the natural environment, what biologists call ecology.

This is essentially a program of field studies; not what can be done in the laboratory with pieces of organisms, with cell or organs, or even by experimentation with whole organisms, but rather the relationships among animals and plants as they exist in the field.

One basic concern motivated the scientists who initiated the International Biological Program. This was that man, more or less in spite of himself, is becoming a geological and biological agent, who can, because of his powerful technology, not only change the world but destroy large parts of it, sometimes without even realizing he is doing