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DISCUSSIONS ON ITEM 6(d) – TOPONYMIC DATA FILES

(submitted by Mr. Andrew Fagg)

Mr. Lewis opened the discussions by referring to his report on the Toponymic Date Files Working Group. This has been published as Working Paper No. 49. He commented on the request for assistance in the development of single romanization systems made by Col. Dave, the expert from India, by stressing the need to implement computer-based toponymic data files from the outset. This is important in the current world, especially as it allows rapid and easy interfacing with cartographic data bases. It would be a retrograde step for nations to develop non-automated toponymic data files.

This theme was supported by Prof. Tazi, who stressed the improved facility for updating maps and gazetteers given by automated files, by Mr. Kadmon, Mr. Raper and Dr. Randall. Mr. Raper commented on the ease with which automated files allowed cross-referencing with related names data, such as historical or administrative information. This theme was developed by Col. Dave, who stressed the need for links between toponymic and cartographic data bases.

Dr. Randall stressed that automated files should be compatible with related data files, and that exchange formats must not be forgotten in the design of systems.

Mr. Böhme noted that the Federal Republic of Germany had found it uneconomic so far to publish updates to their automated files, because the sales for the gazetteers had proved to be limited. This view was contradicted by Mr. Beaudin who noted that the demand for Quebec gazetteers was sufficient to warrant inclusion of update on a regular basis.

Mr. Kadmon further commented on the use of dual scripts and automation, and how Israel had faced up to this. Mr. Lewis commented that this was a problem tackled by others.