

Aspects of the Relationship of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography and the State of California

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Scripps Institution of Oceanography was founded in 1903 as a private organization, the Marine Biological Association of San Diego. However, its founders, Berkeley zoologist William E. Ritter and philanthropists E.W. and Ellen Browning Scripps, planned from the beginning that the marine biological station would eventually become part of the University of California. They were in touch with State of California from the very beginning, and the Scripps Archives include several letters from Governor George C. Pardee beginning in 1904. Pardee wrote Miss Scripps in 1906:¹

Some time ago, if you remember, I had the pleasure of meeting you at Miramar, where Mr. E.W. Scripps was kind enough to delightfully entertain Mrs. Pardee and myself. The subject then engaging our attention was the Biological Station, in the success of which you and Mr. Scripps showed such friendly and substantial interest. From time to time since then I have heard, through Prof. Ritter and others, of the continuance of that interest; and Mr. President Wheeler, of the University, has lately informed me of the very considerable and very generous donation that you have made thereto.

From other sources I have heard of the great interest that the Scientific World is taking in the Station and the great results that are being achieved and expected therefrom.

Will you permit me to assure you that, both officially and personally, I thoroughly appreciate your kindly and generous interest in this matter, and to thank you therefor in the name of the State?

The station became part of the University of California in 1912, and from that date forward, the university matched the yearly subscription of the Scripps Family. During the early years, the institution was allowed to appeal directly to the California Legislature for funding to support research. This was not successful, and so funding was received through the University of California. In 1925, the station was renamed the Scripps Institution of Oceanography.

In 1938, California fishery industry representatives became alarmed at the disappearance of the sardine from California waters and the resulting disastrous decline of the Sardine fishery with a serious financial impact on communities in California like Monterey. Industry spokesman Julian Burnette appealed to California Governor Earl Warren, and in response to the crisis, the California Legislature approved a special tax on fish landings which was to support research on the sardine depletion in 1947. The California Marine Research Committee was founded, and Burnette, its chair, called upon California scientists including Harald Sverdrup, SIO Director, to design a scientific program to address the problem. The result was the California Oceanic Fisheries Investigations (CalCOFI) a program that began in 1947 and continues today. SIO established the Marine Life Research Program to undertake its CalCOFI responsibilities. At the time it was first designed, CalCOFI was the largest and best funded oceanographic research program, which provided some \$400,000 for the investigations. Time, this was more money than SIO got from the Navy, although the Navy soon stepped up its support.

There were always close ties between the institution and the state, and these were described and celebrated at a 1951 conference held at Scripps entitled, "The Position of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in the University, State and Nation." It was about that time that SIO Director Roger Revelle began his effort to establish the University of California Institute of Marine Resources (IMR) at Scripps. IMR was a board institute that fostered studies of fisheries, ecology, food web and other aspects of marine research, including

¹ Governor George C. Pardee to Ellen Browning Scripps, February 10, 1906. Scripps Family Papers, 92-38, Box 1, folder 4, SIO Archives, UCSD.

studies of their economic and social impact. IMR had a lot of connections to the state and received some state funds for research.

In October 1965, IMR released a report entitled, "California and the Use of the Ocean" which was funded by the California State Office of Planning. This landmark report explored the relationship of the sea and its resources to the State of California and its people between 1965 and 1980. It examined marine resources, climate, and the effect of the increase of population along the coast on marine resources of the state. Chapters in the report addressed issues including waste management and pollution control, water and power, fisheries, mineral resources, transportation, population, recreational use of the sea in an effort to plan for the future.

The relationship between Scripps and the State of California has always been a very strong one. I have not mentioned the many research programs and contracts SIO has undertaken for the state in the last century. SIO scientists have long provided expertise to the state. SIO scientists have often testified to Congress as experts in California fisheries, coastal processes, marine resources, careful development of petroleum resources, dumping of waste in the Pacific ocean, and other issues of particular interest to the State of California. Several governors have visited the Scripps campus over the years, and the institution has lived up Governor Pardee's 1906 expectation of "great results."