

## RESULTS OF AN OPINION POLL OF DELEGATES TO ICF4

At the end of ICF4, each delegate was invited to complete and return a questionnaire to provide information for the help of future organisers of ICF Conferences. In all 143 such forms were returned, sufficient for the opinions so collected to be regarded as coming from a reasonable fraction of the total audience. The results of this survey are summarised in this brief report.

The first 15 questions required a straight forward check-list answer, such that the results can be summarised quantitatively as shown in Table 1. This makes it clear that the organisers had made good choices on many of the most important aspects of the Conference. The total length of the Conference, the timetabling of free afternoons with late evening sessions, the number of social functions, the number of topics covered, the number of panel discussions, the length of each plenary presentation and panel discussion period were all points which the majority of those delegates who returned questionnaires believed had been selected just right. There was also considerable support for the use of author-presentation rather than rapporteurs, and the use of workshop foremen to guide the discussion. The convenience of holding the Conference on the very pleasant Waterloo University campus and so lodging almost all the delegates in the one centralised accommodation was also widely appreciated because it helped them to make contact with each other so that they could arrange informal meetings and discussions.

On points on which there was some wish for change, about half of those replying thought that the permitted length of each workshop paper was too short, as was their presentation time. There was considerable support for a reduction in the number of workshop sessions, associated with a significant majority who felt that there were too many workshop papers at ICF4. There was also considerable support for a reduction in numbers of plenary papers.

The final three questions of the questionnaire called for comments on things that should not be repeated, on aspects which should be introduced and for general comments. Any review of the replies to these must of course be somewhat subjective since the wording of each reply was individual and included many fine shades of opinion. Moreover, it appeared that several of those completing the forms duplicated the same comments in various of their replies. In the main, as was to be expected, the written comments reflected the check list answers to the questions summarised in Table 1. The one overwhelming comment was praise for the Waterloo Conference, for the site, for the organisation, the domestic arrangements, the friendly approach, the excellent social arrangements, the efficient office staff and for the publishing arrangements. These points were mentioned in almost every one of the replies, many being expressions of gratitude as well as of compliments. The main source of complaint was in relation to the quality and large number of papers - and several suggestions were made for dealing with this by pre-announcement and selection of favoured topics, by careful and strict refereeing, and by encouragement of other methods of publication. Associated with these comments was the frequently expressed wish for fewer parallel sessions and also for increased time for individual workshop presentations. Another point made in the several answers was that a list of delegates showing residential location issued early in the Conference would be a major help in making contacts. There was some criticism of the choice of plenary speakers, perhaps associated with suggestions that there should be fewer such contributions,

each of which should provide an overview of the present world status on a particular topic and indicate areas where discussion would be of value and appropriate for future work. The need for question time and discussion at the plenary sessions was emphasised. There were of course very individual comments, some of which provide valuable ideas which will be communicated to the organisers of future conferences.

The overall impression gained by reading the questionnaires was one of pleasure and satisfaction with the arrangements provided at Waterloo, and a wish to express the thanks of all those that attended to the organisers.

R. W. Nichols  
President (1977 - 1981)  
International Congress on Fracture  
September 6, 1977.

Table 1. Summary of Replies from 143 Questionnaires

Aspect	Percentage			
	Too many	Right	Too few	No answer
Number of days of Conference	15	83	1	1
Number of plenary lectures	52	46	1	1
Number of workshop sessions	43	45	6	6
Number of topics covered	29	62	4	4
Number of panel discussions	14	55	11	20
Number of social functions	0	80	5	15
Number of workshop papers	57	32	2	9
	Too long	Right	Too short	No answer
Length of each plenary presentation	3	67	27	3
Length of each workshop paper	0	46	49	5
Length of each workshop presentation	1	41	47	11
Length of panel discussions	20	44	7	29
	Valuable	Not Valuable	No answer	
Workshop Foreman system	66	25	9	
Rapporteur Presentation	34	50	16	
Free afternoons with late evening sessions	67	27	6	
"Centralized" accommodation	53	42	5	