

Nov 59

ALGOL conference in Paris.

Naur: Comments on CHARACTER OF DECLARATIONS.

*to dynamic (array) declarations*

My main objections are the following:

1. The questions ~~does~~ not yet seem to be sufficiently clarified. There are the possibilities of range-limiting (1) strictly by write-up, or (2) strictly by time succession, or (3) by both, ~~i~~ restricting the admissible ranges to such parts of programs where write-up and time become identical. What course to follow does not seem clear in general, even to the proponents. Only in the case of procedures is everything clear. Therefore I will admit dynamic array declarations in procedures but ~~ex~~ not elsewhere.

2. There are ~~many~~ other simpler extensions which might at least be considered side by side with the dynamic declarations, such as complex arithmetics, vector- and matrix algebra. These to me are in fact far more obvious extensions. However, in the interest of the practical oriented computing centers, who need a well defined language, I propose to reject them all at this time.

3. Prof. Samelson stresses that ALGOL should not act as a hindrance to people who want to use the more elaborate and ambitious possibilities, and that they should be included because we know how to handle them. To this I answer: (1) We know how to handle complex arithmetics, etc. yet do not include them. (2) It is of course very interesting to hear that dr. Bottenbruch has been able to realize such schemes ~~but~~ but we would like to know more about the cost, in complication in the ~~t~~ranslator, in running time, and in storage space at running time. (3) For people who do research in these matters ALGOL cannot be a hindrance, as Bottenbruch himself has demonstrated. And it cannot be the intention that ALGOL should be a vehicle for experimenting in programming techniques - on the contrary, in order to serve its purpose as a practical tool it must always be kept somewhat conservative.