

PREFACE

The International Permafrost Association (IPA) was founded in 1983 at the Fourth International Conference on Permafrost, held in Fairbanks, Alaska. At that time representatives from Canada, the United States, the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China agreed that an organization was necessary to promote international co-operation and understanding of permafrost problems. The first President was Academician P. Melnikov of the Soviet Union. Today 18 countries are represented on the IPA Council. At the Fifth International Conference on Permafrost, held in Trondheim, Norway, in 1988, Professor T. L. Péwé of the United States became President and a number of Working Groups were established. Two of these Working Groups are concerned with *Mountain Permafrost* (Chairman: W. Haeberli) and *Periglacial Environments* (Chairman: J.-P. Lautridou). The dynamism of these two groups led to the organization of an international meeting devoted to mountain permafrost at Interlaken, Switzerland, in September 1991.

The Editors of *Permafrost and Periglacial Processes* are proud to assist in the publication of the results of this important activity of the International Permafrost Association. We especially wish to thank Wilfried Haeberli, Head of the Glaciology Section at the Laboratory of Hydraulics, Hydrology and Glaciology (VAW) at the Federal Institute (ETH) in Zurich, for the efforts which he has made to the assembly and peer-review of the papers. The Editors of *Permafrost and Periglacial Processes* hope that they can assist in publishing the results of other activities sponsored by the International Permafrost Association in the years to come.

H. M. French, E. A. Koster, A. Pissart
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