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PREMIÈRE SÉANCE

Vendredi 23 août, à 9 heures et demie du matin.

Présidence de MM. GODFREY (Osborne) et D.-E. SMITH (New-York).

Ordre du jour :

- I. Discours d'ouverture.
- II. La Commission internationale de l'Enseignement mathématique pendant l'exercice 1908-1912. Compte rendu sommaire, suivi de la liste des publications, par M. H. FEHR, secrétaire-général de Commission.
- III. Présentation des publications concernant la Commission.

I. DISCOURS D'OUVERTURE

M. C. GODFREY, président de la Section IV *b*, ouvre la séance en adressant la bienvenue aux assistants. Voici le principal passage de son allocution :

« After the words of welcome spoken by Sir George Darwin yesterday, no further words of mine should be needed to make our visitors from abroad feel that they are « at home » among us. But it is fitting that I should avail myself of this occasion to offer to our visitors a very special welcome on behalf of the Mathematical teachers of this country. We Mathematical teachers welcome you, first because we are glad to have you with us and because we are glad to have the opportunity of making new friendships. We welcome you for another reason — because there is much that we can learn from you in the exercise of our craft. M. Bourlet has expressed the opinion that it is futile to transplant the teaching methods of one country into another, and to expect that these methods will always flourish in a new environment. I agree with his remarks ; but I repeat that we have much to learn from you, and I assure you that many of us propose so to learn.

» It is a matter of deep regret to all of us that our natural leader, Professor Klein, is unable to be present at this Congress. I will not anticipate the resolution of regret that Sir George Darwin will submit to you. For myself, I have done my best to acquaint myself with Professor Klein's views on Mathematical teaching, with which I am strongly in sympathy. If I may try to characterize in mathematical language the leading motif of the movement of which Professor Klein is the head, it is this — that mathematical teaching is a function of two variables : the one variable is the subject-matter of mathematics, the other variable

is the boy or girl to whom the teaching is addressed ; the neglect of this second variable is at the root of most of the errors that Professor Klein combats.

» I learn from a letter addressed to Sir George Darwin that there is one matter which interests Professor Klein greatly and that he would have desired to call the attention of the Subsection to it. It is the publication of the Encyclopaedic work *Die Kultur der Gegenwart* which is in course of compilation. This work will consist of a series of volumes in which every branch of culture is explained by experts in non technical language, so that the articles will be within the reach of the reader of general education. This undertaking does not, it is true, appertain to education in the narrower sense of the word, but it does not seem too great an extension of the word to regard it as belonging to our special division. Professor Klein remarks in his letter that it was a matter of much difficulty to determine how so specialised a subject as mathematics could be made a suitable one for memoirs of the general character described, but he is glad to say that a good beginning has been made by Professor Zeuthen of Copenhagen in an article on the Mathematics of Classical times and of the Middle Ages. Those who are interested in this will be able to see copies of the article in the Exhibition.

» The meeting will now be asked to receive the report of the International Commission, and I hope that I shall be allowed to delegate my duties as Chairman to Professor D. E. SMITH, to whose initiative the creation of the International Commission is due. »

ALLOCUTION DE M. DAV.-EUG. SMITH.

« As has already been mentioned Professor Klein, to whose great energy and wisdom the success of the International Commission on the Teaching of Mathematics is largely due, is unable to be present, on account of illness. It was my privilege to propose to the delegates at our meeting on Wednesday the sending of a telegram to Professor Klein, and I now propose the same message to Section IV, as follows : « The International Commission on the Teaching of Mathematics, and Section IV, at their first Cambridge meeting express regret at your absence and best wishes for your recovery¹. »

« The Commission was organized for the purpose of reporting upon the present status of the teaching of mathematics in the various countries of the world. Special sub-committees have also been appointed from time to time to consider questions of inter-

¹ By unanimous vote the telegram was duly sent.

national rather than merely national interest. About one hundred and fifty reports on the work done in the various countries have been prepared, and at least fifty more are in contemplation. A world-wide interest in the improvement of mathematical teaching has been awakened, and the influence of the movement is certain to be very far-reaching.

« Nine countries have completed the task set for themselves. In chronological order of completion these countries are Sweden, Holland, France, Switzerland, Austria, Japan, the United States of America, the British Isles and Denmark. In process of publication is the monumental work of Germany, with twenty-five out of thirty-six reports already printed, and the reports of Hungary, Italy, Roumania, Spain and Russia. In contemplation are the reports of Greece, Norway, Australia, Portugal, Serbia and doubtless of several other countries.

« As to the future work of the Commission, the Central Committee earnestly desires that it be authorized to see to the completion of the reports. It is therefore very desirable that it be continued in power, both for this purpose and for the consideration of certain questions of great international significance. Such topics as the proper training of engineers, of calculus in the secondary schools, of the general value of intuition in the teaching of mathematics, of the training of teachers, and of the educational (cultural, disciplinary, non-technical) value of mathematics, may properly occupy the attention of the Commission in the next four years. Special conferences having already been held at Bruxelles and Milano, it is proposed, if the Committee is continued in power, to hold, others between now and the time of the meeting of the Congress of 1916, if that shall be the date. Possibly such conferences may be held in France in 1914, in Germany in 1915, and in Stockholm in 1916.

« It is also hoped that each country will prepare a summary of the large features of the reports of other countries, to the end that the work that has been accomplished may have its full effect. It is further hoped that the various countries will continue the financial support that has been given to the Central Committee in the past.

« A word should be said at this time in memory of those distinguished teachers who have been connected with the movement, but who have been called from their labours to solve the Great Problem. Soon after the last Congress adjourned, Professor Vailati of Rome, a distinguished writer and an accomplished scholar, passed away. Scarcely in his full prime of life, his loss is felt not by Italy alone but by all who appreciate scholarship and high educational standards. Professor Bovey, President of the Imperial Technical College at South Kensington, and who

was charged with the labour of reporting for Canada, has also been called from us. In his death the world lost a scholar and an administrator of prominence. And as he was planning to attend this Congress, four weeks ago to-day, Geheimrat Professor P. Treutlein of Carlsruhe, passed suddenly away. In his death Germany lost one of her foremost educators, and the International Commission one of its best supporters. »

II. — LA COMMISSION INTERNATIONALE DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT MATHÉMATIQUE DE 1908 A 1912

Rapport présenté à la séance du vendredi 23 août 1912

par

H. FEHR

Secrétaire-général de la Commission.

COMPTÉ RENDU SOMMAIRE

A. — Introduction.

La Commission internationale de l'Enseignement mathématique a été instituée par le 4^e Congrès international des mathématiciens tenu à Rome du 6 au 11 avril 1908. Dans sa séance du 11 avril le Congrès adopta la résolution¹ suivante :

« *Le Congrès ayant reconnu l'importance d'un examen comparé des méthodes et des plans d'études de l'enseignement mathématique dans les écoles secondaires des différentes nations, confie à MM. KLEIN, GREENHILL et FEHR, le mandat de constituer une Commission internationale qui étudiera ces questions et présentera un rapport d'ensemble au prochain Congrès.* »

¹ Cette résolution fut proposée par la section *Philosophie, Histoire et Enseignement*, à la suite d'une série de rapports sur l'enseignement mathématique dans les principaux pays. Sur l'initiative de M. le prof. Dav.-Eug. SMITH, auteur du rapport concernant les Etats-Unis, elle décida de soumettre au Congrès une résolution tendant à créer une Commission internationale chargée de faire une étude d'ensemble des progrès de l'enseignement mathématique dans les différentes nations. Cette proposition avait déjà été formulée par le savant professeur de New-York, en 1905, dans sa réponse à une enquête sur les « réformes à accomplir » entreprise par M. H. FEHR dans la Revue internationale *L'Enseignement mathématique* Vol. VII, 1905, (p. 469).