

CIRCULAR LETTER FROM THE OFFICE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF MATHEMATICAL INSTRUCTION TO THE NATIONAL SUBCOMMISSIONS

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CIRCULAR LETTER
FROM THE OFFICE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION
OF MATHEMATICAL INSTRUCTION
TO THE NATIONAL SUBCOMMISSIONS

In the last circular letter to the national subcommissions dated July 16, 1956, most of the decisions and projects were discussed in relation to the participation of the I.C.M.I. at the Congress in Edinburgh in 1958. The place of discussion was Münster, the time May 27, 1956.

A new meeting of the Executive Committee of the I.C.M.I. has been held in Paris on December 29, 1956, under the presidency of Professor BEHNKE. Aside from members of the Executive Committee, Mssrs CARDOT and DOLMAZON, as representatives for General Inspector CROS, director of the National Pedagogical Institute (former Pedagogical Museum, 29 Rue d'Ulm, Paris, V^e), were present at this session.

The following resolutions were adopted during this meeting:

1. PARTICIPATION OF THE I.C.M.I. AT THE
INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS IN EDINBURGH IN 1958.

The projects that have been worked out at the Münster Meeting on May 27, 1956 were confirmed, as well as the fact that Professor MAXWELL shall be in charge of the negotiations with the directors of the Edinburgh Congress.

The I.C.M.I. disposes of a series of a total of thirty quarter hour periods (which of course is a flexible number fluctuating between twenty-eight and thirty-two, according to the general schedule) for all the speeches which are to be given on the three subject matters proposed for the Congress, which—as you know from Circular Letter of January 23, 1956—are the following ones:

- (1) Mathematical Instruction up to the age of fifteen (given in connection with the material presented at the Amsterdam Congress about mathematical instruction for young people from sixteen to twenty-one years of age),
- (2) The scientific foundation of mathematics on the secondary school level,
- (3) Comparative Studies of methods of teaching beginning geometry.

It was already agreed at the Münster Meeting that the following subject matters are to be introduced by the following speakers:

- (1) Professor FEHR, Columbia University New York,
- (2) Professor BEHNKE,
- (3) Professor FREUDENTHAL, University of Utrecht, Netherlands.

The national subcommissions have been invited by the last two Circular Letters of January 23, and July 16, 1956 to report their contributions to these three subject matters. It has now become indispensable that the Executive Committee be informed about the precise subject of study by each national subcommission. The committee not only has to divide the time of about thirty quarter hours among the national subcommissions, but must also give the results of this endeavor to the Edinburg Conference within the present year of 1957, so that the general program can be prepared easily.

This is why the executive Committee asks the president of each national subcommission to send the answers to the following questions to Professor BEHNKE, president of the I.C.M.I. (Mathematisches Institut der Universität, Schlossplatz 2, Münster, Westfalen, Germany) *before the first of June 1957*:

- (1) Does the subcommission intend to actively participate in the above mentioned subject matters? (Here it is understood that this participation may cover all three topics as well as one or two of them.)
- (2) What is (are) this (these) topic(s) which the subcommission wants to present in Edinburgh? Indicate, if possible, the name of the speaker.

It must be added that, if they so desire, several subcommissions can agree to present one joint report, in which case it would be advisable to notify Professor BEHNKE especially about this.

Since another meeting of the Executive Committee is planned in the beginning of July 1957, it is emphasized again that the reports as to the special wishes and topics have to be sent *in before June 1, 1957*. *Later requests for talks risk not to be considered*. As far as the actual division of the topics by the Committee is concerned, it pledges itself to communicate its decisions as soon as possible.

2. EXHIBITION OF TEXTBOOKS OF MATHEMATICS AT THE EDINBURGH CONGRESS.

The project of an exhibition like the former textbook exhibition during the conference in Amsterdam was talked about and definitely planned. Inspector General CROS, director of the National Pedagogical Institute, who used to be in charge of the Amsterdam Exhibi-

tion, has agreed to offer his services again for the Edinburgh Conference. — In this connection, we remind our readers again, that the same textbooks exhibited in Amsterdam are located and collected by the National Pedagogical Institute and are therefore in easy reach for the I.C.M.I. *Professor Behnke has made photostated copies of this collection, which can be sent to the interested national subcommission.*

The books which were displayed in Amsterdam were almost completely devoted to the instruction of mathematics for young people from 16-21 years of age. It has been decided that the display in Edinburgh shall consist not only of the same books already exhibited in Amsterdam, but in addition of new textbooks, covering the instruction of mathematics for children as well as for young people from 11 or 12 years of age up to about 18 or 19, thus corresponding to the other groups as "middle one" with the beginning classes on one hand, and secondary instruction on the other. — Since the operation of such a project is connected with many organisational problems, another circular letter shall be sent out soon to all the national subcommissions, to acquaint them with the conditions for the participation in the exhibition which are the following:

Choice of documents and books,

their delivery to the Institute,

their return—after the exhibition—to the Institute, where they shall be kept again at the disposal of the I.C.M.I. (as it has been the case with the books displayed in Amsterdam).

In order to establish relations with the Pedagogical Institute, it is requested that each national subcommission shall name a responsible representative, whose name and office are to be given to Professor BEHNKE, as well as to Mr. DOLMAZON, c/o National Pedagogical Institute, 29 Rue d'Ulm, Paris V^e, *before June 1, 1957.*

Professor BEHNKE expresses his thankfulness and indebtedness to the director of the Institute, Mr. CROS, as well as to his colleagues MM. CARDOT and DOMAZON, for their important help and efficient services in aiding the Commission to carry out such interesting projects.

3. MEETING OF THE I.C.M.I. IN BRUSSELS IN JULY 1957.

Due to the initiative of Professor BURNIAT (Free University of Brussels), the Belgian subcommission and the association of Belgian secondary school teachers of mathematics, a meeting of the I.C.M.I. has been arranged to take place in Brussels in the beginning of July, dates set for the conference are the 1st, 2nd and 3rd. During these days speeches on different subjects and discussions are planned.

The professors BEHNKE, KUREPA, FREUDENTHAL as well as Belgian professors are already scheduled to speak.

When the definite program is known, the subcommissions shall be informed about it immediately.

4. STUDY OF THE DIFFICULTIES OF RECRUITING PROFESSORS
OF MATHEMATICS IN THE VARIOUS COUNTRIES.

The Committee has received a proposition by Professor HOPF, president of the International Mathematical Union, concerning a special study by the I.C.M.I. about the difficulties that arise in recruiting professors of mathematics and professors of natural sciences—difficulties which are mostly due to the industrial development which necessitates a greater number of engineers and skilled mechanics. This is a serious problem and corresponds to some extent with a topic presented under the direction of Professor KUREPA at the Amsterdam Conference in 1954, namely “The position of mathematics and the mathematician at the present time”. It shall be dealt with, if not resolved, during the days of the Brussels Conference.

J. DESFORGE,
Secretary.

H. BEHNKE,
President.
