

## THE CALGARY PUBLIC JUNIOR HIGH MATHEMATICS COUNCIL - A REPORT

Royce Williams, President

Mr. Williams is a mathematics teacher at Harold Panabaker Junior High School in Calgary.

Before commenting on the formation and activities of this Regional, I wish to record a few observations made as a result of our experiences in initiating the formation of a regional council in Calgary. These may be of benefit to members in other regions of the province who are contemplating such a step.

1. Get advice either from the Mathematics Council or from experienced council members near you. The suggestions that we received from experienced hands such as Len Pallesen and Marshall Bye were invaluable.
2. When you call your first meetings, it may be better not to raise the question of the formation of a regional. After all, your primary purpose is not to form a regional but to promote the better teaching of mathematics by bringing teachers together in order to discuss mutual problems and to exchange ideas and suggestions. Sooner or later, someone will raise the question of whether or not to form a legal body and affiliate with the Mathematics Council. You should be ready to supply what information is required and to outline the advantages that would accrue to your group by such a move, but I would suggest that you stay neutral and let the teachers decide. We found that some of our most enthusiastic teachers were quite vociferous in their antagonism towards such an affiliation.
3. Keep the program as practical as you possibly can. If a teacher can walk out of your meeting knowing that tomorrow he will be able to apply something that he heard at the meeting, he might just come to the next meeting which you call.
4. The unfamiliarity of the math courses gives you a good reason at this time to get teachers together. While we can expect turmoil and confusion in mathematics programs for many years to come, you may never have the opportunity which the present situation is providing you. In other words, don't wait. Do it now!
5. Encourage all mathematics teachers to attend your meeting. Only paid-up members of the Mathematics Council should be allowed a vote, but all others should be welcome.
6. I think that we have benefitted from our original decision to restrict the membership to public junior high school personnel. Teachers in junior high schools are not particularly interested in hearing about the problems of the Grade XII teacher and do

not want to concern themselves with the difficulties being encountered by teachers who use a text different from the one they are using. You can pontificate on the issue, but most teachers want to discuss their own problems and the solutions to their own problems. Goodness knows, they have enough of them.

In Calgary, we are fortunate in having a number of teachers with considerable experience in teaching the modern math programs. For our meetings we have drawn heavily on those with several years of teaching experience in the S.T.N. series. These teachers were involved in 1960 with experimental courses and have taken students through to Grade IX in the new programs for at least three years. Beginning in January, 1967, we called several meetings. We usually dealt with two or three topics during a meeting. Each topic was introduced by a different person who would lead the discussion that followed. Some examples of the topics we placed on the agenda were (1) the pacing of the Grade VII program, (2) the testing program in S.T.M., (3) different ways of utilizing the response verification books, and (4) how various teachers assigned and checked homework. A demonstration lesson was given (unrehearsed!) to a regular Grade VII class, a review made of resource materials available, and the usefulness of the overhead projector and overlays was emphasized. Only in May, 1967, we brought in a Constitution and formally adopted an affiliation with the provincial Mathematics Council.

With the assistance of our Mathematics Council, our inaugural lecture was given in October by Professor Cleveland entitled "New Trends in the Teaching of Mathematics". Our November meeting was held at the Calgary Instructional Aids Centre to view available films, filmstrips and overlays pertinent to mathematics and, upon request of the Director, to give him our thoughts and suggestions on what we would use in the classroom. The Grade IX S.T.M. program was discussed at the December meeting, special attention being given to its adaptation to a below-average ability group, the time factors involved, which areas need special attention, and where supplementary work and exercise will be required.

This is as far as we have come to date. We are optimistic - as we should be at this time of year - that we will be able to maintain the interest in the Regional shown thus far. However, the winds of change are blowing and the time has passed when teachers sat back and accepted, without comment, decisions vital to them as professionals made by people not as conversant with the problems as themselves. Already there has been some indication that members of this Regional will want to do more than meet and discuss curricular and methods problems. We will have to be prepared for such developments in the future.