

## THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF MATHEMATICS TEACHERS

Marshall P. Bye

The Canadian Association of Mathematics Teachers, associated with the Canadian Teachers' Federation, held an invitational meeting in Ottawa on December 8 and 9. There were representatives from each province at this meeting, in some cases a representative of a teacher organization and in other cases representatives of both teacher bodies and the provincial Department of Education. In addition, representatives from universities, both mathematics departments and faculties of education, and a representative from the Canadian Mathematical Congress were present.

The purpose of the meeting was two-fold: (1) to illustrate what could be done at a national meeting, and (2) to hold a business meeting. The success of the meeting can be best described by summarizing the program and the business meeting.

Success in the first purpose of the meeting was achieved through the development of the theme "Mathematics Curricula in Canadian Schools". The representatives from each province outlined some of the philosophy and policies basic to the setting of the mathematics curriculum in their provinces. Copies of the mathematics curriculum or summaries thereof were distributed by each province. Several provincial representatives indicated the trends in mathematics and the change which might be expected in their provinces in the next few years. During the presentations, the objectives, present state and proposed development of the mathematics curriculum in the provinces were discussed at some length. Information regarding some of the ongoing experiments and the results of some of the past experiments were presented.

It would be impossible to attempt to summarize the reports given in a brief report such as this. However, a view contained in several reports deserves to be mentioned. There is an ever-increasing effort made to accommodate students, each at his own ability level and his own interest level, by the offering of multi-level programs. One illustration of this trend is shown in an excerpt from the presentation by Mr. Hall, Department of Education, Nova Scotia:

At junior high school level, our comprehensive program provides possibilities for school systems to offer four distinct programs:

1. A standard program for those students who will likely take the matriculation program in high school.
2. The remedial program for those students of normal ability with some subject disability. In the case of mathematics, we hope to be able to correct the disability through remedial teaching and then have these students move on to the normal stream.
3. The adjusted course program designed for students who have a

history for over-ageness for grade and whose I.Q. appears to be slightly below average. For these pupils, a diagnostic and remedial teaching program attempts to bring them as far as they can go and to provide them with vital skills that will help them in the world of work.

4. Our auxiliary program which is designed for older-age pupils who are mentally retarded.

This multi-level approach to mathematics and the philosophy that teachers should play a major role in the decision as to what should be taught to a particular class lends initiative to the trend in some areas of eliminating the idea of the "textbook" being the course. It is suggested that this "textbook is the course" approach should be replaced by the use of a series of booklets, each developing a certain concept. The booklets on any one concept vary in difficulty and in method of presentation of the concept. The teacher decides what booklet to use, the decision being based on the type of students and on the interests of the students comprising the class. Ontario has, for Grade X, a central core of five topics with seven more from which a teacher may choose to meet the interest and needs of the students. Such a trend implies a faith in the teacher as a professional and competent authority in his field.

With the initiation of modern mathematics into all the curricula across Canada, there is a mounting concern about keeping mathematics teachers up to date. This raised the topic of inservice training. What should be the objectives of an inservice program? Whose responsibility is it: the association's, the local school board's, the provincial department of education's, the federal government's, or all these mentioned? Is there a role for Canadian television networks, for the CBC, for the National Film Board? Perhaps these questions could be the center of another national meeting.

Many other topics of concern on the national scene were mentioned during the presentations. It seems that there is a need for an extension of inter-provincial discussion in mathematics. It was stated repeatedly that "North-South" communications were more common than "East-West" communications with the obvious result that any provincial mathematics curriculum is influenced more by that which is current in the United States than by that which is current in another province. The question may well be asked of the reader: What do you know of the progressive work in mathematics in Ontario, or Alberta, or British Columbia, or any other province? Your answer to this question might give support to the CAMT.

The second purpose of the meeting was to approve a constitution and bylaws necessary to fully establish the Canadian Association of Mathematics Teachers. In addition to this, an executive council was elected and will be active in carrying out its duties. One of the duties is the preparation and distribution of a newsletter to mathematics organizations and interested people. Other duties will be to plan and prepare the activities of CAMT.

The Canadian Association of Mathematics Teachers has the support of

most areas of Canada. There had been some question as to whether it would be a 'national' voice for mathematics teachers, but with the support now granted - in some cases support in principle - it appears that CAMT will be a truly national association.

Father Egsgard, chairman, pointed out that with the reserve funds of \$650 presently being held by CTF for CAMT, donations of \$50 from the various mathematics associations across Canada would allow CAMT to carry on for another year. In addition, each organization wishing to send a representative to the next annual meeting is asked to budget \$200 for travel, with a view to equalizing travel costs. A number of reasons for equalizing travel costs were presented.

While the budget will limit the amount of activities which can be done in the coming year, it is felt that with the need for a national association of mathematics teachers being brought to the forefront and with the value of such an organization being made evident, the CAMT will grow, its effect will spread, and a growth cycle will be established.

---

#### SEAFARING

That narrow bound between the sea and sky  
Called the horizon, could not but effect  
Efforts of reason in those forced to ply  
Between th' Aegean isles in craft low-decked.

The circle challenges the human mind:  
What is my nature? Use your native skill  
To state it clearly. Search until you find  
All the conclusions reason can distill!

Each line of sight's an equal radius:  
A central angle's formed by any two;  
What is the measure of the interval?  
Did Greek geometers first reason thus?  
The sailor's duties give a steady view  
Of basic problems geometrical!

Alan Cyril Bates, American School, Chicago, Illinois

Reprinted from *The Mathematics Teacher*,  
Vol. LVIII, No. 3, March 1965