

by (14). On the other hand, (3) shows that the expression multiplying dt on the right of (15) vanishes identically, *i.e.* that (15) can be simplified to

$$dg = x'^2 d(1/f). \dots\dots\dots(16)$$

Since $f(t)$ is supposed to be an increasing function of t , it is clear from (16) that $g(t)$ is decreasing.

A. W.

CORRESPONDENCE.

SCHOOL EXAMINATIONS.

To the Editor of the *Mathematical Gazette*.

DEAR SIR,—I read with much interest the discussion on Mathematics in School Examinations, 1950, reported in the *Mathematical Gazette*. Many aspects of the difficulties which the new type of examination may cause for the schools seem to have been fully discussed there. But there is another aspect of it, which affects examiners very closely, on which, so far, little seems to have been said. I refer to the proposal to start the examinations in May. Most examining bodies have circularised their panels asking for their views on this; and until examiners have had some experience of the new type of examination, it is perhaps too early to express strong opinions on the disadvantages of this early start.

For many of those who teach in Universities and Technical Colleges the starting of the examinations in May, which is even earlier than degree examinations themselves are now held, cannot be so convenient as the present June-July period. It is hoped and expected that examining bodies will take due account of this and allow a longer period for marking; but this is only a partial solution, since examining, to be done efficiently and effectively, needs freedom from all other distractions; and surely only a very few fortunate examiners can expect that to be possible in May and early June.

I write thus to you, Sir, in the hope that it may perhaps lead other examiners in Mathematics to express their views through the *Gazette*.

I am, Yours, etc., E. G. PHILLIPS.

“ ISOSCELES.”

To the Editor of the *Mathematical Gazette*.

SIR,—With regard to Mr. FitzRoy Jones' letter (*Gazette*, No. 295, p. 163), *sceles* is not the basic part of *skeleton*, which the *Shorter Oxford Dictionary* says is derived from *σκελετόν σώμα*, which means a *dried-up body*.

I am entirely opposed to giving up the use of the word *isosceles*. I have always found that, even if they have done no Greek, boys are very interested when reminded that *iso* means equal and told that *σκελος* is Greek for a leg, and when this is illustrated by standing upright with the feet apart. This I follow up by telling them that *scalene* is connected with *σκαληνός*, which means *limping*; this I illustrate by standing with one knee bent as though a cripple. If pupils know that *isosceles* means *equal-legged*, they easily remember that the definition of an isosceles triangle is that it has two sides equal.

Yours, etc., A. W. SIDONS.

P.S.—The *Shorter Oxford Dictionary* says *scalene* comes from late Latin *scalenus*, but it gives *σκαληνός* as the derivation of *scalenohedron*.