RANDOM NOTES FROM THE SECRETARIAT

The new Bulletin has started off most successfully and congratulations to Peter Scherk, Jim Lambek, John Peck and all the others who have worked together to launch it so successfully. The reports on the Seminar at Edmonton and the Congress at Banff, which appeared in the first number of the Bulletin, happily make it unnecessary for me to do more than to say that these seemed to be as successful meetings as any we have held. The settings both at Edmonton and Banff were ideal, but without our hosts' careful planning and continued attention to detail, these would have been of no avail.

The future success of the Congress depends primarily on the support of its members and on the leadership and imagination of the officers. We have been fortunate in our presidents and are no less fortunate in having Ralph Jeffery, who has contributed many ideas and much enthusiasm, as our fourth president. He is not only the director but also the progenitor of the Summer Research Institute; his foresight and energy got our Scholarship and Summer School programmes started. But most of our officers carry heavy burdens in the various universities and so the day-by-day work of the Congress must be carried out at the secretariat. Upon it depends raising of the necessary funds, now amounting in all to about one hundred thousand dollars annually, a considerable task in itself, as well as several hundred other things. The present treasurer, whose responsibility has been raising the funds, has been for some years looking forward to relief and retirement. Finding a suitable person to work with him and take over from him has not been easy, but such a person has now been found. Announcement of the appointment of Dr. L.F.S. Ritcey, Professor of Actuarial Science at the University of Manitoba, by the Congress has been sent to all members of the Congress. As the duties of the Treasurer have gradually been extended over the past twelve years, the Council decided to change the name to Executive Secretary-Treasurer; Professor Ritcey will be Associate Executive Secretary-Treasurer. I am looking forward to his joining me at the Secretariat in Montreal on September 1.

This is probably the place to recount our trials and tribulations as well as our triumphs. Of the former the chief was the necessity of moving our office with its Lares and Penates.

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We had been very comfortably settled in a commodious office on the fourth storey of the Chemistry Building at McGill and assumed that squatters' rights would assure permanence, when the new chairman of the Chemistry Department decided to reconstruct the offices and laboratories on that floor. This involved our moving out entirely for a period of several months and being assigned a much smaller office. Our secretary de langue française, Abel Gauthier, came to our rescue and secured two very pleasant rooms for us in the Collège Jean-de-Brébeuf, which is situated in the northern part of the city not far from the University of Montreal. We have been promised office space in the new Engineering Building at McGill, but as that building is at present no larger than a blueprint, we shall have to carry on for many months as a two-headed monster. Our principal triumph is an overall increase in the income of the Congress, the income in the general fund increasing about 25% from some thirty-three thousand in 1956 to $42,290 in 1957. Sustaining members (fee $1,000 or more annually) increased in number from twelve to seventeen and the number of contributors of $25 or more increased from 166 to 192, although there was a small decrease in the total number of contributors. We wish to thank all those in all parts of Canada who helped make 1957 our best financial year.

For a number of years there was talk of initiating a travelling lectureship on a trial basis. This year a very successful trial has been made, the lecturer being Dr. Paul Erdös. The rule of the Congress is to assume responsibility for his expenses of travel from university to university. In the East he spent most of his time at Toronto, but also visited McGill and almost all of the Ontario universities. After Christmas he went West and spent some time at each of the universities, completing his Canadian visit at the University of Alberta. Letters continue to come in telling of the success of this venture and the research that has been inspired by this visit.

A large Canadian contingent will be attending the International Mathematical Congress in Edinburgh, August 14-21. A generous grant from the National Research Council has made it possible to aid a considerable number of mathematicians in attending. Among them will be: R.L. Jeffery, R.D. James, H.J. Zassenhaus, Abel Gauthier, Fritz Rothberger, G.F.D. Duff, Israel Halperin, Peter Scherk and Richard Blum.

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The Australian Mathematical Society many months ago invited a representative of the Congress to visit the Australian universities. They are especially interested in the organization and financing of the Congress and in the operation of the Summer Research Institute. Now, thanks to the cooperation of the Carnegie Corporation, the Australia-Canada Society and the Australian universities, it has become possible for Gilbert Robinson to make this trip. He will spend the three Canadian summer months in Australia, will visit Japan briefly and return by way of India.

On behalf of the Congress I should like to welcome to Canada the fine group of about a dozen mathematicians who have come to us either permanently or temporarily from other countries. In addition to Paul Erdös, who has already been mentioned, and others whose names appeared in "News from the Departments" in the first number of the Bulletin, mention may be made of the arrival of Professor H. Nagao at Toronto. Professor Nagao comes from Osaka City University in Osaka, Japan. When I recently saw him in Toronto he was making excellent progress both mathematically and linguistically. Without the men from other countries on our university staffs our universities would hardly be able to carry on. Mathematicians in our universities come from the following countries: England, Scotland, Ireland (both parts), Wales, Australia, South Africa, West Indies, United States, India, Austria, Germany, Holland, France, Poland, Latvia, Switzerland, Czecho-Slovakia, Hungary, Greece, Roumania, Korea and Japan.

W.L.G. Williams

MONTREAL MATHEMATICAL COLLOQUIUM

The Montreal Mathematical Colloquium is an organization of mathematicians in the Montreal area formed for the purpose of holding regular mathematical meetings and for inviting outside speakers. This year (1957-1958) the following talks were given by the invited speakers:

P. Erdös, "Some combinatoria problems in Set Theory"
W. Magnus, "On Hill's equation"
M. Kac, "Probability theory and potential theory"
A.H. Wallace, "Analytic Equivalence of Curves".

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