

Governor's Report To The Iowa Section

Mathematical Association of America

James L. Cornette, April 29, 1979

As Governor from the Iowa Section, I attended the Board of Governor's meetings August 7, 1978 in Providence, Rhode Island and January 25, 1979 in Biloxi, Mississippi. Also I am chairman of a committee to "Review the Guidelines for Evaluating Collegiate Programs in Mathematics". Each meeting there are 25 to 30 reports from committees, editors, and officers, some of which contain interesting information and most of which receive very little discussion. Reported below are the issues that received most discussion in the Board meetings, and one item (3) of idle curiosity.

1. (August 7, 1978) There was circulated to the Board for its comments a proposed document College Mathematics: How To Teach It. Since all of us are naturally experts on the subject, there was a lot of criticism. The document contains a number of elementary suggestions which common sense already dictates (arrive promptly in the class room), a few suggestions to which some objected (cast out the low test grade), and generally was a rather elementary treatment, probably because Socrates himself could not have written a document to fit the title. It was decided that the Committee should rework the document and submit it for Board approval before it is published. (See 6 below.)
2. (August 7, 1978) It was announced with alarm that the Carter Administration was attempting to create a cabinet level Department of Education and that said department would (might) assume the present NSF responsibility for science and mathematics education. Two resolutions were passed
 - A. Opposing the establishment of a Department of Education, and
 - B. If a Department of Education is established, opposing the budgetary transfer of science and mathematics education to it.I voted against A (it seemed to me to be flailing away at the whole system) and for B (scientists and mathematicians must continue to be responsible for science and mathematics education) and communicated the same to Representative Tom Harkin, who agreed.
3. (January 25, 1979) Appointments to forty of the Association committees were approved.
4. (January 25, 1979) The Board received a report from the Committee on Placement Tests. They have written mathematics placement tests that are being used by about 200 institutions. Each institution pays \$75 per year for use of the exams. The Committee would be happy if lots of people were to demand their services.
5. (January 25, 1979) The new building for the MAA national offices has been purchased and partly occupied by the Association and the remaining space has been fully leased. The building cost approximately \$800,000 (including renovations). The Building Fund produced \$360,000, the Association invested \$100,000, and there is a \$350,000 mortgage at 9 1/2%. It is still quite appropriate that Association members make contributions to the Building Fund.
6. (January 25, 1979) It was argued that the requirement past last August that College Mathematics: How-To Teach It be submitted for Board approval was an unusual requirement and might inhibit or discourage other committees that prepare MAA material (almost all on a volunteer basis). The Board reversed itself.