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IRISH MATHEMATICAL SOCIETY

SECRETARY'S REPORT   (January 1983 to August 1984)

As I must now resign as Secretary of the Irish Mathematical Society because I am to go on leave for 1984/1985, I feel it is appropriate to summarise my activities as Secretary.

1.   Massera *et al.*

Shortly before I took up office the Society decided to support the cases of J.L. Massera (an elderly Mathematician and Parliamentarian imprisoned without trial in Uruguay) and V. Kipnis (a Russian Mathematician who had his doctorate revoked following refusal of permission for him to emigrate). As directed by the Society I wrote various letters in support of these two mathematicians to appropriate Ambassadors, to the President of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, to the Minister for Foreign Affairs in Ireland and most recently (in January 1984) to the United Nations Centre for Human Rights. Most of these letters did not receive a reply but the Minister replied (in a sympathetic vein) to several of my letters and finally the United Nations, the Minister and the International Campaign for Massera wrote to inform the Society of Massera's release in March.

No progress appears to have been made in the case of V. Kipnis, though (in March 1983) the Minister for Foreign Affairs informed us that he was aware of the case. (See also the report by S. Dineen in the Newsletter of March, 1984).

The Society has now been requested to lend its support to a new campaign in support of Yury Orlov (Physicist) and Anatoly Shcharansky (Computer Scientist) both of whom have been refused permission to emigrate from the USSR. The

Society is to decide its attitude to this campaign (which is organised by those who ran the Massera Campaign) at the December 1984 Ordinary Meeting.

Y. Orlov obtained his doctorate in 1963 and worked at a Physics institute in Armenia until 1972, when he moved to Moscow. In 1973 he wrote an open letter in support of Sakharov and became a founder member of the Soviet Branch of Amnesty International. He was dismissed from his Moscow post in January 1974. He continued various kinds of political activity until 1978 when he was arrested and sentenced to seven years hard labour and five years exile, at a suspect trial. He has since been punished for trying to smuggle a scientific article out of his prison.

A. Shcharansky worked at the All-Union Scientific Research Institute of Oil and Gas until 1975, until he was dismissed following repeated unsuccessful applications to emigrate. He then became associated with Sakharov and the Helsinki group. The Soviet press began a campaign accusing him of spying for the USA. He was then convicted at a closed trial and sentenced to 13 years in prison.

These summaries are paraphrased from a May 1980 article by Israel Halperin.

2. Aer Lingus Young Scientists Exhibition

I suggested early in 1983 that the Society might consider sponsoring a prize at this Exhibition. The Society agreed but Aer Lingus eventually replied that they felt more than a prize would be needed to encourage Mathematical projects.

In response to the Aer Lingus request P. Boland drew up a list of topics considered suitable for projects. I have since expanded this into a short article. In addition N. Buttimore (TCD) has written an article on projects concern-

ing software for computer-aided Mathematical instruction and A. Wood (NIHE, Dublin) has written an addendum on Mathematical modelling. These have been circulated to a limited extent, but unfortunately they were not ready in time for the IMTA to circulate them. Aer Lingus are considering including them with other literature on the Exhibition.

3. Joint Meeting with LMS

I wrote to the London Mathematical Society asking them to consider co-operation and reciprocity with the IMS. This has resulted in a proposal (as yet not completely firm) to hold a joint two-day meeting of the LMS and IMS in Ireland in 1986. The meeting, assuming it goes ahead, will probably take place in Dublin on a Friday afternoon and a Saturday morning. There will be six lectures by eminent invited speakers on a coherent set of topics of wide interest. This represents a new departure for the IMS and I hope it will be possible in the future for the Society to organise similar meetings on a smaller scale but with more than one speaker. The proposed joint meeting with the LMS will coincide with the 10th anniversary of the founding of the IMS.

4. Newsletter

As all members are by now well aware the Newsletter has reached an enviable standard of professionalism in recent years due to the efforts of its editor Donal Hurley assisted by Pat Fitzpatrick. The Society and its Committee have repeatedly expressed their appreciation to the Editor and to the Associate Editor. Donal Hurley has indicated that he wishes to step down as Editor after the March 1985 issue, when his term of office expires.

5.   Organisation

Some changes in the organisation of the Society have occurred in the past two years.   First the system of having local representatives has proved an efficient means of distributing the Newsletter and collecting dues.   Second the responsibility for distributing the Newsletter has been given to P. Boland and myself, to relieve the Editor of this unnecessary burden.

This seems an appropriate point to mention the conscientious and herculean efforts of the Treasurer, G. Enright, in keeping the Society's financial affairs in order and in collecting outstanding subscriptions.   He has also succeeded in attracting a moderate number of members from abroad.

6.   IMTA

Discussions with the Irish Mathematics Teachers Association with a view to establishing reciprocity of membership and closer co-operation have been going on for some time. M. Clancy has represented the IMS.   While reciprocity of membership has not yet been established, some benefits have arisen from the discussions.

Richard M. Timoney

26th July, 1984

CONFERENCES

The Irish Mathematical Society is happy to be able to assist with the funding of mathematical conferences.   During 1983/1984 we sponsored Professor Everitt's Lecture Tour in December, UCD Matrix Theory Conference in March and UCG Group Theory Conference in May.   Applications for support for 1984/1985 should be submitted as early as possible.   Forms are available from the Treasurer.

ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY

Proceedings

Section A of the Proceedings of the R.I.A. is available to members of the Irish Mathematical Society at a special price.   A discount of one-third of the normal price is allowed on orders placed through the I.M.S. Treasurer.

Institutional Members

Institutional Membership of the Irish Mathematical Society is available for 1984/1985 at IR£35.00.   Please encourage your Department, College or other Institution to join and to support I.M.S. activities in this way.   Institutional members receive two copies of each issue of the Newsletter and they may nominate up to five students for free membership of the Society.   Subscriptions are normally paid in advance in September of each year.

Ordinary Members

Ordinary Membership of the I.M.S. continues to be good value at IR£3.50 (internal) and IR£4.00 (overseas) for the session 1984/1985.   Please encourage your colleagues at home and abroad to join.   Subscriptions are normally paid in January of each session.   Local Representatives should collect from members who do not use Banker's Orders.   All subscriptions should be forwarded to the Treasurer.   Application forms for new members are available.