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Conferences

The IABSE has been very active in conducting conferences in this first period of 1983. Among the various activities, we can mention here

- the Conference of the French group of IABSE, AFPC, March 15 and 16, 1983 in Paris;
- the Colloquium on Ship Collision with Bridges and Offshore Structures, May 30 to June 2, 1983 in Copenhagen, and
- the Workshop on Quality Assurance within the Building Process, June 8 to 10, on the Rigi mountain resort, Switzerland

There is a saying about conferences: if each participant gets one new idea by attending a conference, then it might well have been worth investing the time and money in the conference.

The subjects dealt with in these three conferences were quite diverse:

- themes of general interest and daily concern to the majority of design engineers
- a very special theme, requesting the cooperation of experts from fields other than structural engineering
- a fundamental theme requesting possibly a more healthy discernment than highly sophisticated theories.

The types of conferences were also very different due to the background and number of participants. Two remarks may be made about these conferences.

Firstly, participants tend to register much later today than a few years ago.

This is certainly the impact of the economic situation.

Secondly, registrants to the conference really attend and participate actively in the conference.

From the three cases above it was noticed that the attendance in the meeting room was, from the first to the last session, at least 80% of the conference registrants. This is a very high figure, and is higher than in the past. The discussion from the floor was very lively and participants made very good remarks, comments and contributions to the theme. It seems also that the time allotted for presenting a contribution is nowadays longer than it used to be in past

IABSE meetings. Less speakers, but enough time for each to develop his/her presentation. More time also for the free discussion.

It is most appropriate at this point to congratulate the local organizing committees for their dedication to the success of the conferences. They have done an excellent job in a very professional way. Many thanks to them for they also contribute to the good reputation of our association.

It seems that the number of conferences organized worldwide on any subject of structural engineering or any other field, is increasing. The overall amount of money available for attending these conferences seems to be decreasing. We therefore have to be very careful in organizing conferences. Only if they meet a need. For the organization of IABSE conferences we shall, in the future, develop a handbook for committees wishing to organize a conference. We would like therefore to draw the attention of all our members to information they might have or advice they would like to give us for preparing this handbook. We would possibly include this information in the handbook.

At the time of printing the current edition of the IABSE PERIODICA many participants still had not registered for the IABSE Symposium in Venice, September 29 and 30, 1983. It is a hard job for the organizing committee to guess how many participants will attend and to prepare a technical and social programme of quality for all of them. But we are quite confident that the trend noticed in the last months will apply also to Venice: people will register late, but will register and come to Venice. So, let us speak of the coming event, and that is the Congress in Vancouver, September 3-7, 1984. You will help the organizing committee by expressing your intention to participate in the Congress – this helps planning it.

We look forward to seeing you in Venice!

*A. Golay
Executive Director*