# Meetings

## The Teaching of Chemistry

A seminar on "The Status and Development of the Teaching of Chemistry" was held in June 1960 in Greystones, Ireland, under the auspices of the Office for Scientific and Technical Personnel of the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC). It was attended by delegates from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The U.S. representatives were J. A. Campbell (Harvey Mudd College, Claremont, California); L. E. Strong (Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana); Robert Rice (University of California, Berkeley); and Paul Westmeyer (University of Illinois, Urbana).

The seminar made recommendations to the OEEC as follows.

1) Three *ad hoc* committees (*A*, *B*, and *C*) should be set up on an international basis, each committee to consist of six to eight members—university teachers, secondary school teachers, and school inspectors from the various member countries.

Committee *A* would examine the developments in theoretical chemistry in the light of their pertinence to secondary school teaching and of reports from the seminar and comments received on them from member countries. It would then draft the outline of a modern syllabus of chemistry suitable for secondary schools of the member countries. This syllabus would be expanded by explanatory notes and would be published by the OEEC as a manual or handbook for teachers of chemistry in secondary schools.

Committee *B* would undertake a similar task in relation to practical applications and would extend the manual to cover laboratory and demonstrational experiments.

Committee *C* would examine the matter of training and retraining of teachers of chemistry at secondary school level, with a view to establishing machinery to insure an adequate supply of teachers conversant with modern scientific developments and capable of teaching a course based on modern concepts.

2) Chemistry students should have, at all stages of instruction, the necessary background in physics and mathematics. It was recommended that courses in physics (in particular, introductory electricity) and mathematics (through elementary solid geometry) precede the introduction of chemistry.

While it was conceded that teaching of physics and chemistry by the same person in courses at the introductory level is desirable, it was emphasized that specialist teachers of the two subjects are required at the more advanced levels of secondary school teaching. It was agreed that much coordination in mathematics, physics, and chemistry courses could be achieved through cooperation of teachers in the planning stage.

3) Instruction in the following areas is basic to the teaching of chemistry at all levels and should be particularly emphasized at the higher levels in secondary schools: atomic structure and electronic theory of valency, chemical equilibria, and energy in chemical reactions. Presentation (particularly in courses on inorganic chemistry) of disconnected factual data unnecessary for illustrating underlying principles should be eliminated.

4) Practical work, both demonstrational presentations to illustrate lessons on theory and experimental work by students in the laboratory, is essential to the proper teaching of chemistry at all stages and should be included in the secondary school program.

5) The OEEC might recommend to member countries who operate a national syllabus and examination that certain designated schools be permitted to teach, on an experimental basis, approved courses not included in the syllabus.

6) In view of the importance of teacher retraining programs to provide teachers for the modernized course in chemistry, the OEEC should discuss with the suitable authorities in the various member countries means of promoting and financing extensive retraining programs.

A final report on the seminar is scheduled for publication in late spring.

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## Forthcoming Events

### June

*2–3.* Canadian Soc. for Clinical Chemistry, annual general meeting, Guelph, Ont. (C. R. Cameron, Ontario Veterinary College, Guelph)

*2–5.* Latin-American Congress of Physical Medicine, Lisbon, Portugal. (C. Lopez de Victoria, 245 E. 17 St., New York, N.Y.)

*3–11.* Medical-Surgical Film Festival, 4th intern., Turin, Italy. (Minerva Medica, Corso Bramante 83–85, Turin)

*4–9.* Mass Spectrometry, ASTM Committee E-14, Chicago, Ill. (G. Crable, Gulf Research Center, P.O. Box 2038, Pittsburgh 30, Pa.)

*4–10.* World Congress of Psychiatry, 3rd, Montreal, Canada. (A. Roberts, Al-