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7. Design Workshop at the IABSE Congress



R. Silman commenting a Design at the presentation session.

A new event was introduced at the Congress – a Design Workshop sponsored by Working Commission V. The goal was to invite registrants to participate actively in the Congress, rather than merely attend scheduled events as passive observers.

At the time of registration all Congress attendees were given the opportunity to pick up a packet on the Design Workshop. Forty-five persons did so. The packet outlined a structural design problem – to cover a sports field and two areas of seating with a clear span of 60 m by 80 m. The instructions stated that the kind and form of presentation were to be left to the discretion of each participant.

Designs were to be turned in by Thursday noon so that they could be arranged for display at the discussion session at 5:00 p.m. that day. Designs were to be presented on one or more sheets of A-2 paper, with any supplementary information furnished as desired. Only an identification number was placed on the drawing, but entrants were encouraged to submit their names in a separate envelope.

The organizing committee did a splendid job of providing space and materials for the entrants. A room off of the ground floor lobby was furnished with drawing boards and stocked with paper, pens and pencils, scales, triangles, templates, etc.

Nine persons submitted designs, some with multiple entries or variations. Countries represented includes Fed. Rep. of Germany, Switzerland, USA and Italy. The designs varied from tensile and fabric roofs; to steel trusses, rigid and space frames; to concrete shells. About seventy-five people attended the presentation session on Thursday afternoon where beer and light refreshments were served. All of the designs were exhibited. Six of the entrants were present and they explained their designs to the audience, with emphasis on the methodology which impelled them to produce their work.

The Design Workshop can be considered to be a modest success. A random sampling of opinion of both entrants and non-participants revealed that it was difficult to find time in the busy Congress schedule from Monday to Thursday to devote to the Design Workshop. Several suggested that if the idea were to be tried again that perhaps it could be done in a much shorter period of «brain-storming», say over lunch and perhaps working in groups. The results might then be hung as a Poster Session or photocopied into a booklet for immediate distribution and the results discussed in a scheduled session.

(Robert Silman, Chairman)