5. The social status of mathematicians.

The social position of mathematicians has undergone some change. Before the war a student of mathematics, unless he was exceptionally brilliant, had practically no other professional choice than becoming a teacher in a secondary school, unless he was willing to become an actuarian. The latter prospect was not very attractive for most students—except from a purely remunerative point of view—as the mathematics to be used remained on a rather low level, whereas one had to absorb a good deal of practical economical knowledge, for which no educational base was present. This has been changed now, since the university instruction in actuarial science came into existence, which implies an education in the fundamentals of economics.

Moreover, more jobs in applied mathematics, and especially in statistics became available. At present, the study of statistics can be combined with the actuarial one, a combination which is rather attractive to some students.

The increased number of possibilities in industry, together with those in universities (from professorships to assistantships) and in other institutions has, like in other countries, lead to some shortage in manpower in mathematics, also with respect to teachers. This, of course, is also caused by the customary overburdening of teachers by too big classes and too many lessons, and by their payment which until recently was very bad, but has improved considerably since. A further considerable improvement would be obtained if a " sabbatical year " for teachers could be obtained, not, of course, for taking a " busman's holiday ", but with the special purpose that they may from time to time (while retaining, of course, their salaries) revisit a university, in order to renew their knowledge of modern mathematics, to get acquainted with modern applications of mathematics, and to do some scientific work. Such a large scale " teaching of teachers ", however, is still far out of sight, and, anyhow, diminution of classes and teaching-hours is primordial.