

## A Column

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Master Editor Middleton has commanded a regular feature to be devoted to news and comment on some of the peripheral matters of interest to Canadian geoscientists, for example politics and politicians, sex,\* relations with GAC sister societies, assorted scuttle-butt and rife rumour. (\*A good thing we retained that comma!) To do this adequately we'll need contributions from geoscientists across the country, preferably those who are willing to link their names to their views and opinions. In addition we'll need a title for the column and suggestions will be gratefully received. Something like Changing Facies, Glaring Unconformities, Diastems or even Diatremes might be suitable. Please, nothing crude like Blue Schist or other dinnerfest adaptations of new global tectonics.

### When is Big too Big?

Recalling the '75 dinnerfest brings to mind other aspects of our recent very successful annual meeting at Waterloo. Its size (swelled by the North Central Section of GSA and other groups) impressed many of us with the fact that we have suddenly become too large to share our annual meeting with others - except of course, our long-time partner, the Mineralogical Association of Canada. Presently we are committed to meet with the Society of Economic Geologists in Vancouver in 1977 and with the Geological Society of America in Toronto in 1978. The Vancouver meeting should be manageable but the Toronto meeting will present serious problems. We last played host to GSA in Toronto in 1953 when we had about 300 members and a fairly low level of activity. That very successful joint meeting did much to bring recognition to the GAC. The 1978 meeting will undoubtedly also bring kudos and credit to the Canadian scientific community but this time it will seriously interfere with our own annual meeting which is designed to serve 2500 members and their very active sections and divisions. Remember our non-meeting with the IGC in Montreal? It is surely not too late to think in terms of

holding a separate annual meeting some months before we host the GSA meeting. A site such as Lakehead, Regina or Fredericton might help growth of regional interest in these locations.

### Geopolitical Developments

The Canadian Geoscience Council has been actively conveying to cabinet ministers, high level civil servants and university presidents the messages of its recent state-of-the-art report "The Geosciences in Canada - 1974". President Dick Slavin and his special committee have met with the Hon. C. M. Drury, the Hon. Donald McDonald and also with Drs. Schneider and Gingras of NRC, Leclerc of MOSST, and Smith, Fortier and McLaren of EMR. The messages emphasized include the need for increased funding of non-governmental geoscience research, the desirability of the geoscience community playing a larger role on advisory and policy-making committees and the urgency associated with the current loss of scientific manpower in some segments of the mineral and energy sectors. There have been some positive responses: Council has been invited to submit lists of candidates who might be considered for appointment to NRC and to its Grant Allocations Committee and also to Science Council. Probably the most encouraging response has been from the Geological Survey of Canada. Digby McLaren, Director, has asked Council to submit a list of names from which he will choose several to serve on his Program Forecast and Budget Planning committees and also to help screen the Research Agreement and Contract applications.

These successes are an outgrowth of the 1974 exercise. Meanwhile a group consisting of Chris Barnes (Waterloo), George Garland (U. of T.), George Mannard (Texasgulf), Eric Parker (Shell), Norbert Morgenstern (U. of Alberta), Tom Bolton (GSC) and Guy Perrault (Soquem) are hard at work on compilation of the 1975 and 1976 Canadian Geoscience Council Reports. The Council is slowly getting the message across that the geosciences can make an important contribution to the solution of energy, food, environmental and other crises that face us in the remaining years of this century and that geoscientists must receive more support and be consulted more

frequently by the policy makers. You can help the cause by including quotable quotes from *Geoscience Canada - 1974* next time you submit a budget, request a new staff position or propose a geoscientist as your university or company president.

### We Are Not Alone

Geoscientists are not the only people who are questioning traditional priorities in the support of non-governmental research. The academic agriculturalists and veterinary scientists have publicly deplored the dearth of research funds in their fields. They claim that this has led to falling enrolment in graduate studies so that demand for trained scientists now outstrips supply. The foresters are making rather similar complaints. The Biological Council of Canada, an umbrella association like our own CGC, has prepared a report entitled "The Urgent Need for Increased Funding". In it they point out that Biology is not "little science" but that it is labour-intensive and hence very expensive. Furthermore, they point out that its technological sophistication is quite the equal of Chemistry or Physics. However, the average operating grant in Biology is only \$9,870 whereas that in Chemistry is \$14,345.

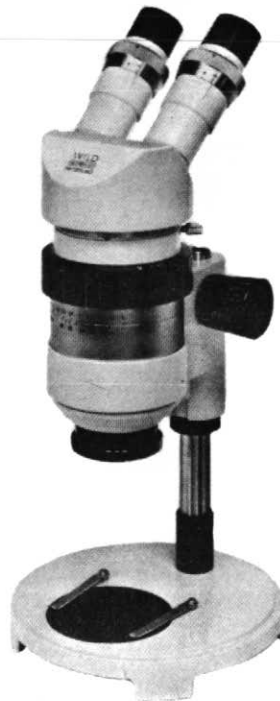
Unlike the CGC, the biologists have taken off their gloves in their fight for a place in the sun. Possibly we should follow their lead and raise questions relevant to our own situation: why are chemistry and physics departments so much bigger than geology departments in almost all universities, what variety of scientist holds down the top administrative posts in universities and governments, are there imbalances that are being perpetuated despite rapidly changing national needs? Our societies and our co-ordinating Council must not only monitor the health of the geoscience disciplines but they must remain alert to development in other sciences to prevent the establishment or maintenance of harmful pecking orders.

### Brown Baggers

No matter how well the Australians run next year's International Geological Congress they will have difficulty in matching the lasting impression that Canada scored with its sturdy brown brief cases with their modest little IGC logos. These badges of distinction just don't wear out. Brown baggers have

been readily identifying each other as geoscientists in airports all over the world for the past three years. Even the energy crisis won't interfere with this lasting souvenir of the Montreal Congress because, as you've probably discovered, these indestructible paper cases fit nicely into the rat-trap carriers on bicycles.

MS received August 7, 1975.



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