

The Canadian Political Science Association/Association canadienne de Science politique et/and La Société québécoise de Science politique.



RETURN ADDRESS:

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ON THE FRONT BURNER /
DU SECRETAIRE-TRESORIER DE L'ACSP

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all of our members and guests to the 54th Annual Meeting of our Association. We note that this year's programme involves in direct programme participation, some 350 of you in the nearly 85 sessions of a rich and varied programme. We would urge that your first act upon receipt of this newsletter would be to sit down in a quiet corner and read

most particularly the section of the President's report (page 4ff.) which deals with the issue of SSFC membership. I recommend to you most highly the summary that you will find there and urge you to consider it and discuss it among yourselves or with Board members before proceeding to the vote that faces you on Tuesday afternoon at the Annual General Meeting.

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ANNUAL REPORTS / RAPPORTS ANNUELS

PRESIDENT'S REPORT / RAPPORT DU PRESIDENT

DENIS STAIRS (DALHOUSIE)

1. General

Although cynics (in a bad year) might find evidence to contest the point, the purpose of the CPSA is to promote the study of politics, not the practice of politics. On occasion, no doubt, the two are confused and brawls break out. But from the point of view of our internal affairs, 1981-82 has been a good year, and the cynics have had a thin time.

Your Board of Directors held three meetings, and your Executive, four. The Board has been unusually conscientious in subjecting its own behaviour to self-criticism—so much so that last spring it charged Susan McCorquodale with the task of collating, with a critical eye, all the resolutions passed by CPSA Directors over the preceding ten years. This initiative took courage, for there was genuine fear that her investigations would reveal patterns of erratic decision-making, uncover commitments honestly made but never met, and cause the professor herself to experience repeated attacks of *déjà-vu*. It is a pleasure, therefore, to report that her review of motions, presented at our November meeting, demonstrated that your Directors have been neither inconsistent nor repetitious in their successive acts of collective will, and that the Association displays an admirable "group-memory". It would be pleasant to attribute this to the favour of divine guidance, or even to solid homework, but the credit must actually go to our Administrator, Joan Pond, who does so much to protect us from ourselves.

Members of the Association who have a keen eye for damage wrought by inflation and other financial diseases will notice that we end our fiscal year with a modest deficit. The details are in the report of the Secretary-Treasurer, but it should be observed that, in the short term, at least, the situation is not appropriate cause for either financial or emotional depression. More specifically, we expect the deficit to be relieved by effects of the new fee schedule authorized at the 1981 Annual General Meeting.

Broadly speaking, your Executive and Board have been concerned in 1981-82 more with external, than with internal, affairs. To the extent that agendas are defined by problems, this circumstance pays tribute to the sanity of mind and generosity of spirit of our own membership, but it may suggest a somewhat less flattering portrait of the external environment with which we must deal. At the behest largely of government, in any case, that environment has been changing. In particular, there have been major adjustments—actual and threatened—to both the tenor and substance of government policies affecting higher education and research, and these have significantly influenced the programmes and priorities of the SSHRCC, have substantially altered our own recommended position in relation to the Social Sciences Federation, and may eventually have a profound impact on the character of our Journal, on the conduct of our academic conferences and workshops, and on many of our other scholarly pursuits, both inside and outside the Association. The

issues involved promise to be with us for some time, and some of them will be evident in the discussion of other items in this report.

2. Canadian Journal of Political Science

John Courtney and Duff Spafford assumed on schedule their responsibilities as English Co-Editor and Assistant Editor, respectively, of the Journal, and with David Smith in charge of book reviews, the editorial function on the anglophone side is now almost entirely in the secure and capable care of prairie intellectuals. With the help of John McMenemy, who daily demonstrates his indispensability as Managing Editor on location at W.L.U., the transfer of authority from Kal Holsti and Don Blake at U.B.C. was smoothly accomplished, and the Journal continues to display its customary high standard of scholarship.

Thanks are also due to Denis Monière, who retired as francophone Co-Editor early in 1982. The ScSp arranged for him to be succeeded by Jean Crête, who had previously been assistant editor with responsibility for reviews of French-language books. Jean has been replaced in his former position by Graciela Ducatenzeiler of the University of Montreal.

The Journal, of course, is the product of much labour from many minds—contributors, assessors, reviewers, members of the Editorial Advisory Board—but the task of these various members of the Editorial Board is particularly difficult and onerous. More than other members of the Association, they are responsible for safeguarding the standards of our scholarship, and for representing them to the academic community at home and abroad. We owe all our editors—those who have retired, and those who have succeeded them alike—a professional debt we can never hope to repay.

But if the editorial fortunes of the Journal go well, it may shortly face on another front a challenge of a different kind. Some time ago, the SSHRCC, from which we obtain a substantial grant in support of the Journal's publication, established a committee under the chairmanship of Paul Park to review its programmes in aid of scholarly publishing. The impetus for the review came partly from the unprecedented increases in the cost of book and periodical publication which have become so evident in the past few years, and partly from the proliferation in the number of journals actually being published. The effect of both these developments has been to intensify the demands currently being placed on the Council's limited aid-to-publications budget.

By the summer of 1981 there were indications that the Park Committee would be recommending that at least a portion of the Council's resources be allocated to the funding of alternative methods of scholarly communication (microfiche, and the like), in the hope that this would encourage the academic community to move away from its traditional reliance on conventional journals. In an effort to exert some influence on the Committee, the SSFC in the autumn organized a meeting in Toronto between

various journal representatives and members of the Committee. Our own Association was represented by one of its former co-editors, Paul Fox, and by Fred Fletcher, who had served several years ago on our Ad Hoc Committee on Publications, and was familiar with the advantages and limitations of some of the new technologies.

The meeting appears to have produced a number of useful exchanges, and in November your Board authorized the Secretary-Treasurer to send a letter of concern to members of the SSHRCC Council and of the Park Committee, indicating that the Association was anxious to cooperate as much as possible in achieving economies in the scholarly publication field, but urging that changes in aid-to-publications policy not be introduced until the financial implications of the new technologies had been fully examined, and until academic editors had had an opportunity to comment on such proposals as the Committee might generate.

The Committee's report was subsequently presented to Council in March, but action has been postponed pending a response to its recommendations from the academic community. This has provided our Association and others with a short breathing space in which to consider the matter further, but it seems improbable that the Council will support traditional academic journals like our own, at current rates, indefinitely into the future if, as seems likely, costs continue to increase and the number of periodicals continues to expand, while the resources available for the support of publishing do not significantly grow. It follows that we may eventually face greater-than-normal fee increases if we are to maintain the Journal in its present elegant form. Certainly the issue will reappear again on our agenda.

3. The Bulletin

Members will have noticed that the Bulletin has appeared this year in a new and more durable format. This is the result largely of the dedication of our Secretary-Treasurer, Vince Wilson and our Ottawa staff, who very generously agreed to add the Bulletin's editorship to their other intricate and time-consuming duties. The teething problems caused by technical changes in the production process last year have been largely overcome, and we expect now to publish regularly on schedule. The Bulletin depends very heavily, of course, on submissions of copy from individuals as well as Departments, and we hope that members will make full use of it as a vehicle for communicating information to their colleagues in the discipline.

It is with some distress that I must also report, however, that the ScSp indicated last June that the Bulletin was not fulfilling the needs of the Société, which has its own instruments for the internal communication of professional news, and that it would therefore like to withdraw from what the Protocol between the two associations identifies as a joint publication. The Société's representatives on the Liaison Committee very kindly agreed to withhold final judgment until Vince Wilson had had an opportunity to undertake his revamping of the format, but we were advised again earlier this year that the improvements he had introduced were not sufficient to change their minds, and they have therefore withdrawn from their participation.

Our understanding is that the Société would prefer a Bulletin that was geared less to the conveyance of "straight" professional news, and more to the publication of commentaries on various intellectual, professional, and public policy issues. To some extent, the difference of conception between the two organizations may reflect the greater availability in English-speaking Canada of

alternative outlets for this sort of article, together with the fact that the wider physical dispersion of the anglophone political science community leads to a somewhat greater need for a formal mechanism to distribute professional information. In any event, the CPSA position has not been opposed in principle to the publication of commentaries, and within practicable limits, space is available for this purpose provided only that expressions of opinion are clearly identified as personal to the author. Your Executive also believes, however, that a properly managed publication of this kind would require substantially more editorial, administrative and financial resources than our already overburdened head office would be able to provide.

4. The Programme Committee

If the Programme Committee has had problems this year, your Executive and Board have been blissfully unaware of them. The members of the Committee, as we all know, perform one of the Association's most important functions, and their willingness to serve leads to a merciless exploitation of their time and energy. We are exceedingly grateful to them all, and particularly to that well-known glutton for punishment, Fred Fletcher, who has so inobtrusively guided the Committee's activities from the Chair, and who continues to serve the Association in so many other ways.

As a close observer of Herman Bakvis at work last year, I know what it takes to be the on-site anchor for our annual visitations, and I would therefore like to express particular thanks also to Clinton Archibald, who has acted as our liaison at the University of Ottawa.

5. The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

The support of the SSHRCC continues to be a vital factor in sustaining our operations, and we are grateful to its officers for the time and attention they give to our affairs. The task of allocating administrative grants to social science societies has been delegated by the Council to the SSFC, and as the report of the Secretary-Treasurer reveals, we have continued to do well under the Federation's formula. Funding for the Journal has been maintained on the basis of the reduced projections of which we were advised by the Council some years ago. On the other hand, we have received slightly expanded funding for fellowships for the Essex Summer School, and this has enabled us to maintain the number of fellows at three, in spite of rapidly increasing costs. The high reputation of the Parliamentary Internships Programme has led to its receiving another grant again this year, and the fund in support of travel to our annual meeting was renewed in the usual way through the Federation. In addition, the Council provided substantial support for the India Workshop held last August.

It is clear from the foregoing that the SSHRCC has continued to respond very generously to the needs and proposals of our Association. At the same time, however, a number of the Council's policy initiatives have attracted the attention of your Board over the past year, many of them ultimately reflecting the funding priorities of the federal government, to which Walter Young referred in his report last spring. These have since been discussed quite widely in the press and elsewhere, and have included a substantial decline, in relative terms, in government funding for independent research in the social sciences and humanities. This phenomenon has not been peculiar to Canada, and in many ways we have been treated much more generously than our counterparts abroad. Nonetheless, one of the consequences of our comparative lack of resources, when coupled with the accelerating cost of academic publication, was the Report of the Park Committee, already

