

C.I.H.S.

BULLETIN

S.H.I.C.

MARCH 1987

VOLUME 1

NUMBER 1

Supplement "B"

FIRST PLENARY MEETING OF THE SOCIETY

The first full meeting of the Canadian Immigration Historical Society took place at External Affairs (courtesy of Ben Pflanz and the Department) on the morning of November 22 1986. It can be said without fear of contradiction that this meeting was an unqualified success.

There were thirty-eight people present, from all aspects of Immigration: present and former "Home Service" officers, present and former "Foreign Service Officers", two former Directors-General of the Foreign Branch, the former Chairman of the Canadian Employment and Immigration Commission, the current Chairman of the Immigration Appeal Board, and many other legendary figures from the post-War world of Canadian Immigration. Most welcome and unexpected was the presence of Professor Freda Hawkins, author of the definitive work "Canada and Immigration: Public Policy and Public Concern", who just happened to be in Ottawa that week by one of those pieces of serendipity that we all hope will be associated with the Society's functions.

Acting Chairman Fenton Crosman first welcomed all the members. Treasurer Harry Cunliffe then outlined the financial situation, and spoke of the members now enrolled from all parts of Canada, from British Columbia to Newfoundland. Bernard Brodie, Secretary, then outlined the progress made to date on the twin issues of incorporation and charitable status.

Harry Cunliffe then led the assembled members through the proposed Constitution and By-Laws. The revised version of the Constitution stemming from this meeting is attached to this Bulletin for the benefit of members. In fact, surprisingly few changes were made to the original documents. Two amendments only were made. One was a change in the Corporate Membership fee, now increased to \$1,000 from an originally proposed \$500. The other was a clarification of the entitlements to automatic (non-sponsored) membership for spouses and widows or widowers of former officers.

The members present also gave their blessing to a resolution that the Organizing Committee be expanded by four persons and be authorized to continue with its work until incorporation or until the Annual General Meeting in the summer of 1987 occurs, whichever is the later. As a result of this, four new volunteers came forward to join the original committee members and were unanimously approved by those present. All are well-known figures in Canadian Immigration: Mr. Kingsley Beattie, Mr M.G. (Bud) Clark, Ms. H. (Viggi) Ring, and Dr. Ed Ziegler.

Members of the original committee then spoke in turn on various aspects of the Society's operations. Les Voisey discussed a project to create a bibliography of Canadian Immigration, stressed the need for all officers to start to put their memories of their operational years down on tape or paper, and alluded to the creation of a co-ordinating group within the executive of the society to serve as a clearing house for research projects. Al Gunn discussed the reception and classification of artifacts and written historical material. He asked members to hang on to their memorabilia and artifacts for the time being, as where these might be stored by the Society has yet to be resolved, but he also stressed the importance of items such as organization charts of the former departments, photographs taken of immigration operations, retirement parties etc.

The issue of an infrastructure for the Society, in terms of space for meetings, mailing privileges etc. was addressed by Ian Rankin. So far this has been taken care of thanks to the kindness and co-operation of Madame Falardeau-Ramsay, Chair of the Immigration Appeal Board.

Dr. Gerry van Kessel and Ben Pflanz spoke next of the centrality of immigration to the Canadian reality and experience and to understanding the country we live in. Gerry stressed the top priority of recording the memories of our officers, specially our older members; of the need to establish links with the academic community; and of the need to establish retention and screening mechanisms for the capture and treatment of material which - though currently contentious - will with time be of great historical value. Ben spoke of the usefulness of the Society as a link between 'serving' and 'retired', and between those in the immigration function both in Canada and abroad, now sundered by organizational changes. An instance of the Society's effect as a catalyst was the decision to bring Maurice Mitchell in from Montreal to talk to all last year's External Affairs Foreign Service recruits - a very successful presentation.

Bernard Brodie addressed the need for a communication vehicle (your are reading the first of these), and referred to possible future activities such as the concept of writing a history of the Immigration Department, much along the lines of the 'corporate' histories of the CPR or of Revenue Canada Customs which have been produced in recent years.

After the Committee members had ceased speaking, our distinguished guests (all of them active members, by the way) spoke in turn.

First came Professor Hawkins. She expressed her delight at being present, mentioned the needs for just such a Society, and wished us well for the future. Her personal contact with many of those present went back some twenty-five years to the time of her doctoral dissertation which later became her famous book, now, incidentally, in revision, and to be re-issued in the autumn of 1987 with a companion volume of interest to members: "Critical Years in Immigration: Canada and Australia Compared", which will address the immigration policies of both countries from the year 1900 onwards.

Our next speaker was Jack Manion. He also expressed strong support for the Society, and sketched out a suggested action plan. He too felt that the taping of oral history from former immigration officers was a high priority, and mentioned how common this recording of 'corporate culture and history' was becoming in North American private industry. He urged all members to sort through their papers and put them as soon as possible in the Society's hands. He suggested closer links with the National Archives and offered his own services to talk with the Dominion Archivist. The Society had a role, he felt, in 'lobbying' the Government to improve the recording of such history. He also advised the Society to make the Government aware of our existence, firstly because the Society's goals were important in themselves, and second because the knowledge of our existence might help us go farther and faster than would otherwise be the case. His last advice was to get some big project underway soon - something with which all immigration people could identify and which could become a focal point. In particular he instanced the suggested preservation of Pier 21 in Halifax as a heritage site or a Museum of Immigration and Ethnic Minorities.

Joe Bissett was the last of the guest speakers. He reminded us all of the human dimension to immigration; of the strength of people's convictions about immigration. While there was much pain associated with immigration, there was also a great deal of humour. Memories of happy times lent immigration officers present and past that camaraderie and morale that was often the envy of other public servants.

Several other officers spoke from the floor, most notably Dr. Kayserlingk of Ottawa University, once an immigration officer, now a history professor. He praised the many virtues of the archivists, but strongly suggested that we look after our own archives, do our own research, and publish our own books and pamphlets, a sentiment that drew applause from the audience.

Fenton Crosman closed the meeting with a vote of thanks to the many people present who had made the Society's existence to date possible.

GERRY VAN KESSEL - An immigrant from The Netherlands, Gerry celebrated his 7th birthday in the Quarantine area of Pier 21 Halifax. Educated Canada and Great Britain, Ph. D, History, London School of Economics. Joined Immigration at Ottawa 1973, various positions in policy and operational areas and currently Director of Special Projects.

AL GUNN - Ex R.C.A.F., joined Immigration in 1946. Served at Dorval, Montreal, Brussels, and Ottawa. Retired December, 1980, from position of Director, Program Data.

BEN PFLANZ - Joined Immigration as F.S.O. in 1964. Postings to date have been: Cologne, Munich, Stuttgart, Milan, Tokyo, Seoul, Nairobi, and Manila, interspaced with Ottawa. Currently Director, Asia and Pacific Programs, External Affairs.

H.L. "LES" VOISEY - Joined Immigration at Ottawa, July 1946, and served at Ottawa, Toronto, and Winnipeg, and abroad 1959-60 and 1963-68. D.G. M. & I., Western Canada, 1971 - 77. Retired Ottawa, April 1982.

M.G. "Bud" CLARK - Director of Personnel, Citizenship and Immigration 1959 - 62. Director General, M & I, Foreign Service, 1972 - 74. Commissioner for Canada, Hong Kong, 1974 - 77, and subsequently Treasury Board and Privy Council Office.

ED. ZIEGLER - A refugee to Denmark from Czecho-Slovakia before 1939, and subsequent escape to Sweden and movement to Britain for war-time service with the Czechs, entered Canada 1956 Pier 21 Halifax ex SS Zuiderkruis. Ph.D. (Economics), Copenhagen. Program Development Service, in charge of immigration research and senior director, policy analysis. Chairman of the Refugee Status Advisory Committee 1978 -1980. Minister's delegate in Refugee Status Determination. Retired September, 1985.

VIGGI RING - Immigrant from Denmark. C.B.C. 1947 to 1951. Immigration (Placement) Montreal 1952 to 1960 and subsequently Foreign Service to 1983 (Copenhagen, Cairo, Helsinki, Stockholm, Ottawa, Belgrade, Ottawa, and Glasgow.

KINGSLEY BEATTIE - With Immigration since 1954, in various capacities at Montreal, Vancouver, Ottawa, Santiago. Currently with Immigration Operations, N.H.Q. Ottawa.

An ad hoc member, by virtue of his much appreciated role as proctor for the I.A.B. is HENRY J. STAUFFENBERG. An immigrant from the U.S.A. (1971), Ph. D. (Comparative Medieval Studies, University of Ottawa), currently the Research Officer at the Appeal Board. Previously in teaching, publications, and academic administration.
