

Minutes of the General Assembly of the Canadian Historical Association, 26 August 1995 at the Université du Québec à Montréal.

1. Introduction of Dr. James Leith.

Veronica Strong-Boag, as past president of the CHA, introduced James Leith, president of the CHA.

2. Minute of Silence.

Following the Address there was a minute of silence in memory of deceased members of the CHA.

3. Adoption of Agenda.

James Leith moved for an adoption of the agenda. Greg Kealey seconded the motion. Passed.

4. Adoption of the Minutes of 13 June 1995.

Moved by Greg Kealey. Seconded by Fred Thorpe. Passed.

5. President's Report.

James Leith reported that he has contacted the Organization for the Study of National History in Canada and informed its executive that it is always welcome within the CHA as one among several special interest groups. He added that he wrote an open letter to all historians in the country stressing the importance of unity in this time of economic contraction. He noted that the CHA has done a membership drive -our health as an association, after all, is dependent on a large membership. He said that the declining membership is not the result of the new secessionist organization but the result of a variety of factors: people are counting their pennies, an inefficient U of T Press that is responsible for the membership list, and a desire among some scholars to belong only to their specialized associations. Jim Leith reminded the assembly that a large membership list is important to CHA lobbying efforts.

Speaking of lobbying, Jim Leith pointed out that lobbying the federal government has taken up a large part of his time as President: among other things, he has attended Breakfasts on the Hill and appeared before the Standing Committee on Finance. The reality is that we, as scholars, will continue to face cuts well into the foreseeable future. Thus the CHA must proceed with its efforts to cut its own budget.

Financial cutbacks have meant that the CFH and the SSFC must join to create a new society, one that will represent the common interests of humanists and social scientists.

Jim Leith then reported that he had received a positive response from the Minister responsible for archives in Nova Scotia: a successful compromise has been reached and the hours of the PANS have been extended. However, he was much less successful with the Vancouver Museum; indeed, he only received nasty letters from its head reminding the CHA to stay out of what is a labour dispute.

Speaking of archives, Jim Leith explained that he, Chad Gaffield and Carol Martin of the SSFC met with Jean-Pierre Wallot to discuss the matter of the 1991 nominal census returns. To store this data will require 12 km of shelf space! The cost of microfilming the data is very high. If the CHA and J. P. Wallot pressure Statscan to preserve the documents it might very well move, as some other countries have, to a sophisticated

poll, one with a sample of 35,000. Moreover, the Privacy Commissioner is reluctant ever to release data because the nominal returns clearly state that the information collected will only ever be used by the government for statistical purposes.

Jim Leith then expressed concern about the preservation of audio, visual and electronic data, the sources future historians will rely on to write the history of the twentieth century. We, as the professional association of historians, ought to develop a clear policy on this matter.

Another matter consuming much of the President's time has been the legal charge of plagiarism made by two male professional historians against a female popular historian. Because the two professional historians failed to provide the Executive with any supporting documentation other than their personal accusations the Executive decided that it was not in the position to remove the popular historian from the programme. The matter has since necessitated the development of a new policy as to the CHA's legal defence fund which will be brought forward momentarily.

6. Treasurer's Report.

In the absence of Dr. Claude Beaugard, Dr. Strong-Boag read the report on his and Marielle Campeau's behalf. She reported that this year there was a deficit of \$9,000.00. The Council fully expects to be in the black this coming year.

Dr. Donald Smith asked for the cost of the CHA poster recently sent to all members. Dr. Strong-Boag reported that this was paid for through funds provided for by the Department of National Defence.

Adoption of report moved. Seconded. Passed.

7. Report of the Nominating Committee.

On behalf of Joy Parr, Eric Sager and Alison Prentice, Chad Gaffield thanked Joanne Mineault for her assistance and he reported that Judith Fingard will be this year's nominee for Vice-President. He asked for other nominations. There were none. Donald Wright will be the new English language secretary.

8. Prizes Committee.

Dr. Ken Dewar announced this year's prize winners. Results are announced in this Bulletin.

9. Resolutions.

Concerning the CHA/S.H.C. Annual Conference, Jim Leith proposed the following motion: "Proposals will be chosen solely on the basis of their scholarly merit, subject to the selection committee's ability to incorporate the proposals into viable sessions."

Dr. Strong-Boag seconded the motion.

Dr. Donald Smith questioned the purpose of such a motion: after all, is it not taken for granted that the selection committee considers the academic excellence of proposals and its ability to create viable sessions.

Dr. Strong-Boag agreed but argued that a recent incident has necessitated the writing of a clear statement of policy.

Dr. Jim Leith read a second but related motion: "Inclusion in the programme does not imply endorsement of either the ideas of the proposal or the integrity of the scholar by the CHA. Acceptance of the proposal is without prejudice."

Dr. Bettina Bradbury seconded the motion.

Dr. Leith then read a third motion: "Application for assistance from CHA legal fund will be considered from members in good standing if the issue at stake is deemed to be in the interest of the profession as a whole. Upon receipt of an application, the Executive will constitute an ad hoc committee of 3 senior members of the profession who will make a recommendation to Council as to whether Council should provide funds. Council will then make the final decision. This policy will supersede existing legal defence fund policy."

Dr. Andy den Otter seconded the motion.

Dr. Donald Smith wanted more explanation and clarification of what amounts to a significant change in policy.

Dr. Strong-Boag explained that the existing policy and recent precedents were contradictory. Owing to a recent application to the legal fund, Council decided to adopt a new policy.

Fred Thorpe recommended that we vote on first two motions and then vote on the third.

Dr. Michael Behiels questioned the constitutionality of these motions: does not the Assembly require more time to debate and consider changes in CHA policy?

Dr. Strong-Boag informed the Assembly that only changes to the Constitution required advance notice, not changes in policy. The proposed motions did not affect the Constitution.

Individual votes were then held on the 3 motions.

First motion: against, 1; abstention, 1; for, remainder. Passed.

Second motion: against, 0; abstention, 1; for, remainder. Passed.

Just before the vote on the third motion Anne Leger-Anderson asked, what if two members are involved in a law suit. Jim Leith explained that the ad hoc committee might very well recommend that both members receive funds but that it is up to the ad hoc committee to make its own recommendations.

Third motion: against, 0; abstention, 0; for, unanimous. Passed.

Jim Leith then read the fourth motion: "Be it resolved that Council accept only 3 new members; that the past-past President be dropped from Council; and that the Fall Executive and Council meetings be combined."

Michael Behiels questioned the ethics of advertising 4 positions up for grabs on Council but, in the end, accepting only 3 new members.

Greg Kealey agreed, adding that he was glad his name was not on the ballot!

Fred Thorpe and John Dickinson echoed the sentiments of Drs. Behiels and Kealey.

Greg Kealey proposed a friendly amendment: that the motion be passed as is but that the decision to take only 3 and not 4 new members take effect next year.

Amendment seconded. Passed.

Fourth motion: against, 4; abstention, 0; for, remainder. Passed.

Dr. Leith read the fifth motion: "Be it resolved that there be a five dollar increase in membership fees for all categories."

Donald Wright seconded the motion.

Fifth motion: against, 4; abstention, 0; for, remainder. Passed.

Dr. Leith read the final motion: "Be it resolved that, for Canadian residents, membership in the CHA is a requisite for giving papers at the annual meeting."

While there was much discussion on the wisdom of demanding membership in the CHA Greg Kealey pointed out that it is not unusual for membership in an academic society be required in order to present a paper at that society's annual meeting.

Sixth motion: against, 8; abstention 3; for, remainder. Passed.

10. Announcement of election results.

Jim Miller is the new Vice-President. New Council members are: Jean Barman, Sylvia Van Kirk; Serge Courville and Donald Smith. Colin Howell and Wendy Mitchinson were elected to the Nominating Committee. Jim Leith thanked Brian McKillop for his work as Chair of the selection committee.

11. Meeting adjourned.