

OSLO 2000: 19TH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF THE HISTORICAL SCIENCES

Meeting in Oslo on that city's 1000th anniversary for the first time since 1928, the CISH, as it is rendered in French, enjoyed a highly successful conference. Canadian participation in the intellectual work of the Congress was rich and varied. Approximately 50 Canadian scholars attended the conference and most were on the programme. This is remarkable given that our numbers were only 16 in Madrid in 1990 and we had only 64 Canadians on the Montreal programme in 1995. Clearly, the CHA, a member of CISH since 1929, is an important participant in CISH life.

In my capacity as the official Canadian delegate to the CISH General Assembly, I attended meetings on 6 and 10 August. At the first meeting I was elected to serve on the Audit Committee and thus found myself working with Professor Kathleen Burk of University College London and the CISH Treasurer Professor Pierre Ducrey of Lausanne. The finances of the organization appear to be in good shape although I must admit to some surprise that the organization is not wealthy by any stretch of the imagination. Its only significant source of revenue is its membership and the annual fee of 800 Swiss Francs is low.

The major responsibilities of the General Assembly in a congress year are to elect a new executive and to choose the next congress site. In both I think there is reason for Canada to be pleased with the results. The 20th CISH will meet in Sydney, Australia at the University of New South Wales in 2005. Given the amount of Canadian collaboration with our Australian colleagues that already exists, I think the opportunities for fruitful Canadian participation in 2005 are great. In addition Dr. Jean-Claude Robert of the Université du Québec à Montréal has been elected as the new Secretary General of the organization. Jean-Claude will be moving the CISH secretariat to UQAM which should further increase Canada's already large role in the CISH. Other members of the new executive include President Jurgen Kocka of Germany, Vice Presidents Eva Osterberg of Sweden and Romila Thapar of India, and incumbent Treasurer Pierre Ducrey of Switzerland. Other executive members at large come from Russia, France, Israel, Japan, Spain and the United States. The

two past presidents Theo Barker of England and Ivan Berend of the USA retain seats as well. One moment of humour from a Canadian perspective came when, during the elections, outgoing Vice President Natalie Davis had to reassure some worried Eastern European delegates that Jean-Claude would maintain the bilingual tradition of the organization whose official languages are English and French!

The CISH is a complex organization as one would expect on the international scale. It currently has 58 member nations of which 34 are in Europe, 11 in Asia/Oceania, 7 in Latin American, 4 in Africa, and 2 in North America. Continuing efforts are being placed on increasing African and Latin American participation.

CHA involvement in CISH makes sense for all the obvious reasons but it is also a concrete example of the CHA's efforts to serve all Canadian historians. The majority of the Canadian scholars present in Oslo were not Canadianists as one would expect. One can only hope that they are or will soon become members of the CHA.

I would like to thank Jim Leith, my predecessor in this role, for all his hard work on behalf of the CHA. I would also like to extend Canadian thanks to the former Secretary General Francois Bedarida of France and to retiring Vice President Natalie Davis.

In my role as Canadian delegate to CISH I shall be participating over the next few years in the process of planning themes and recommending scholars for the Sydney Congress. Although it is early in the process I would be happy to receive ideas from all of you. I can be reached either through the CHA or directly at gkealey@mun.ca.

The new CISH web site is at www.cish.org.

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