

# THE SEVENTIES IN REVIEW

## C.A.O. IN THE DECADE OF THE SEVENTIES

In tracing the progress and activities of C.A.O. through the 'seventies it would be impossible to comment on all of the projects and programs so an attempt has been made to highlight some events in each year. It was an exciting and progressive decade and one in which C.A.O. matured in a great many ways. Many of the projects, such as a western school of optometry, were continuing throughout the ten years and still have not come to fruition, but nevertheless, progress has been achieved and a great many people have been educated as to what optometry is.

The decade began under the very capable and efficient leadership of Woody Spearman and the Executive Director Mr. Mel Mellow. In 1970 Mr. Greg Walsh was engaged as an assistant to Mr. Mellow and served C.A.O. over the next four years. During the year a sophisticated keyman project was undertaken and a successful lobby conducted with the Federal government. A comprehensive brief was prepared regarding a western school of optometry under the chairmanship of Hugh MacKenzie and was widely distributed in order to promote a third school of optometry in Canada. Ten years later this is still a high priority within C.A.O. and we remain eternally optimistic. This was also the year that C.A.O. embarked upon the production of T.V. public service announcements under the able guidance of Ron McPherson. This project was and is an unqualified success and Canadians from coast to coast have viewed these films.

The same Ron McPherson assumed the presidency of C.A.O. in 1971 at the Biennial Congress in Vancouver. Fred Attridge received the President's Award on that occasion and Greg Walsh took over the

duties of Executive Director upon the departure of Mel Mellow. C.A.O. Council took the formative steps during this year to establish the Canadian Optometric Trust Fund which was eventually constituted as the Canadian Optometric Education Trust Fund. This year saw optometry attempt to resolve the differences between ourselves and ophthalmology by initiating discussions and meetings with the Canadian Ophthalmological Society and the Canadian Medical Association in the role of mediator. There was great optimism at the time but the benefits of these meetings were very limited as history will show. Another major project in 1971 was the preparation and presentation of a brief to the Federal Government regarding the controversial Competition Act.

In 1972, the Council approved the change in location of the C.A.O. office from Metcalfe Street to the present quarters on Gladstone Avenue. This provided our staff with a more pleasant and efficient working environment as well as improving our image to the public and other organizations who visited the office. Steve Finlay was employed as an executive assistant and allowed us to broaden our programs. As a result of our lobby, the Federal government ruled that federal funds could be used by provinces to cost share for optometric services. C.A.O. received many compliments on the effectiveness of our lobby. C.A.O. hosted a national conference on legal affairs in which all provinces participated and gained an in depth insight as to optometric law across the country. Another significant milestone in 1972 was the sod turning for the new School of Optometry Building at the University of Waterloo.

In 1973 a very successful Biennial Congress was held in Winnipeg and

saw the inimitable Ivan J. McNabb installed as President of C.A.O.. A tireless worker on behalf of Canadian optometry, Ted Fisher, was the worthy recipient of the President's Award. This was a year of vigorous contacts with various Federal government departments and optometry gained significant credibility within these departments as a result. It was realized that the constitution of our organization was in need of revision and this project was embarked upon in 1973. Council recognized the advantages of a standard academic qualification across Canada for entrance into the practice of optometry and work was begun on a National Council of Optometry and this project is still under way. A notable conference was held during this year when the New Academic Facilities Committee arranged a visit to the School of Optometry in the University of Waterloo for representatives of the Health and Education departments of the four western provinces. This very successful meeting was another effort to educate the right people as to the need for a third school of optometry. Council also approved the concept of a joint meeting of C.A.O. and the American Optometric Association to take place in Toronto in 1977.

The priorities for 1974 did not change significantly as the western school, interprofessional relations and a national board of examiners topped the list. C.A.O. played a supportive role in the hearings conducted on the Ontario Health Care Disciplines Act and optometry emerged from the discussions with a very healthy and creditable image. We indicated our cooperation to the Federal government in relation to metric conversion and appointed a member to this committee. A successful tour was sponsored to Aus-



tralia and Greg Walsh resigned as executive director to return to school and study law. Don Schaefer was engaged as Greg's successor.

Half way through the 'seventies saw the Council move their spring meeting to the beautiful city of Montreal in order to enhance relationships with the Quebec Association. Up until now, it had been the Quebec College of Optometrists who was represented on C.A.O. Council and it was thought it would be more appropriate if the Association were the member. While in Montreal, Council members were privileged to have a delightful tour of the School of Optometry, University of Montreal. Steve Finlay resigned as executive assistant and was replaced by Mike DiCola who assumed the position of Public Information Coordinator which included responsibility for the administrative duties for the Canadian Journal of Optometry. The first Biennial Congress which C.A.O. administered instead of the local provincial association was held in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Appropriately, a prominent member of the Nova Scotian Optometric Association, Garson Lecker, was installed as President. Clair Bobier, a household name in Canadian optometric circles, was the surprised recipient of the President's Award and the Association in general session approved the new constitution. Hearings on the ophthalmic industry were initiated by the Restrictive Trade Practices Commission and C.A.O. as well as most provincial associations appeared before the committee in various cities. The important document "Role of the Optometrist in Health Care Delivery" was published this year and C.A.O. contracted with Crawley Films for a new series of public service announcements for television.

In 1976, the C.A.O. Council held their first meeting of the year at the new School of Optometry building at the University of Waterloo and the Quebec Association was represented for the first time instead of the Order or College. Discussions

were held with the Ministry of Transport regarding certification of visual fitness for aircraft pilots and successfully resolved. This was the era of the Anti-Inflation Board and optometrists, like other self-employed professionals, had to learn about income reporting, compliance forms, and other bureaucratic paraphernalia. C.A.O. sponsored a successful tour to Israel which was very well attended.

The following year saw Mike DiCola leave C.A.O. and Tom Little was employed as his replacement. The Index of Canadian Optometry was published and distributed to all C.A.O. members to assist them in identifying colleagues across the country for referral and other purposes. This was the year of the big joint congress with A.O.A. in Toronto and the dynamic Roy Brown ascended to the chair of president. The president-secretary meeting was most successful and took on a new format which is still in use at the end of the decade. Four topics of keynote importance were presented to the meeting and these were—Scope of Practice, Education, Legislation and Communication. Firm goals were established and time frames were set up for achieving those goals. From my viewpoint, it was at about this stage that C.A.O. as a professional organization moved from adolescence to young adulthood. Harold Coape-Arnold, a past-president of C.A.O., received the President's Award on this occasion. That meeting was also a memorable one for another reason—it was here that the formation of the Canadian Optometric Education Trust Fund was publically announced and the first donation was received from E.J. Fisher.

In 1978, the Council, in keeping with its objective of coming in contact with practitioners across the land, held its spring meeting in Victoria. Two events took place during that meeting, one of which was pleasant and the other sad. The latter was that the Council reluctantly accepted the resignation of Don Schaefer. He and Maureen were de-

sirous of serving in a third world country and had plotted their course accordingly. The enjoyable event was the visit to the University of Victoria, where at that time there was sincere hope of establishing a school of optometry. C.A.O. collaborated with the Canadian Public Health Association in the publishing of a journal on eye and vision care. Public Health workers in all areas of Canada received this journal and the joint venture was very successful. This was the first year a president-secretary meeting was held in the absence of a Biennial Congress. Provincial leaders felt that the meetings were of sufficient value and benefit to be held on an annual basis and the 1978 meeting did not disappoint them. Two excellent speakers in the persons of Ron Hansford and Bruce McDonald presented keynote addresses and it was particularly interesting to hear from Mr. McDonald, an expert on consumer law, who gave an objective view on our profession. His experience as counsellor for the Couture Commission provided him with a deep insight into the ophthalmic industry. Another gratifying event during this meeting was the tribute paid to Maurice Belanger on the occasion of his twenty-fifth anniversary as Editor of the Canadian Journal of Optometry. Few people have demonstrated faith and dedication to optometry on a par with Maurice. This was also the year that the Canadian Ophthalmological Society submitted a brief to the Drug Directorate in the Federal Department of Health recommending that certain ophthalmic diagnostic pharmaceuticals be placed on Schedule F. which would make it difficult if not impossible for optometrists to utilize them. These consisted of cycloplegics, mydriatics, topical anaesthetics, and miotics among others. C.A.O. responded with a very comprehensive brief and the outcome was that the C.O.S. recommendation was not acted upon. A tour was sponsored to the Orient and as well 1978 was a year of extensive press coverage mainly due to



the efforts of Roy Brown and Tom Little.

The Fall Council Meeting was held in Quebec City and Councillors experienced the opportunity of a tour through the facilities of the Quebec Health Insurance Board. The impact of third party contracts in optometric care became more evident and a separate committee was formed to coordinate a study in this area. Sue Jabour, a long time employee of C.A.O. left our employ and she was replaced by Ruth Wilcox.

Nineteen seventy-nine brought still more staff changes when Peter Welsh resigned and we were fortunate that Don Schaefer's plans did not jell and he was able to return as our executive director. The biggest event of the year in terms of publicity was, of course, the eclipse.

C.A.O. in concert with the provincial associations did a fine job of publicizing both the scientific phenomena and the dangers associated with it. As a result, injuries were kept to a minimum and optometry received extensive and excellent public recognition. A record attendance at the Biennial Congress in Edmonton was an indication of the unqualified success of that event. The Alberta Association Committee under the chairmanship of Scott Brisbin did an outstanding job and set a high standard for future Congresses. Bill Lyle was the worthy recipient of the President's Award and at that same meeting the National Council of Optometry became a reality. Keynote topics at the president-secretary meeting were Consumer Education and Third Party contracts and the two capable speakers were Harry Basman of Manitoba

and Bill Reinertson from the American Optometric Association. In this closing year of the decade some of the goals of C.A.O. have been achieved and some have been shelved or forgotten and others are being aggressively pursued. The Trust Fund is alive and well, the third school is still a wish but by no means neglected, the National Council and Third Party Care Committees are very active and C.A.O. is in a firm and stable position to carry on its work on behalf of optometrists in Canada.

As the decade of the 80s begins the Council is resolute in its intent to promote and enhance the interests of Canadian Optometry because they know this will in turn make possible more efficient, available, economic eye and vision care for the citizens of Canada.

Jack Huber O.D.

## The Dynamic Optometric Program Planning of the 1970s

It is a privilege for me to be given this opportunity to comment upon the attitude changes in program strategy that have occurred in the philosophical approach of Canadian optometry to the vision care issues in the 1970s.

I would summarize the 1970's as being a vital period where the leaders of Canadian optometry consolidated their thinking into specific objectives for the profession's future and developed a plan of action for achieving the objectives. They identified the obstacles to the achievement of these goals and built in response, a goal-orientated organizational structure capable of dealing effectively with them.

For an appreciation of how we consolidated our thinking about our future objectives and set about developing a future plan of action, I would refer you to two specific documents. The development and publication in 1974 of our position paper "The Role of the Optometrist in

Health Care Delivery" was a bold and courageous move by the profession. Within this single document we stated in a very concise manner the future goals and aspirations of our profession for public, governmental, and medical consumption as well as our own internal uses. We have worked diligently towards the achievement of its major themes. We ended the decade by participating in the Federal government's review of the national health care delivery system which was directed by Justice Emmett Hall. Our detailed brief to this federal commission further reflected in specific terms the future goals and aspirations of the profession as a leading component in the primary vision and care delivery system. Both of these documents placed the profession on record as being committed to the objective of moving the profession beyond our present modes of service delivery and into the position of providing for the unmet vi-

sion and eye care needs of the Canadian public.

Our 1970 activities also included the identification of the obstacles currently in place within the political and health care systems that would prevent us from achieving our specified objectives as identified in the Role Document and the brief to the Hall Commission. We isolated and then summarized these issues into the following four categories of obstacles. a) The **Legislative** obstacles to the achievement of our Scope of Practice ambitions were identified as being centered around the need to introduce a provision in the provincial optometry acts for the use of pharmaceutical agents, the maintenance in government legislation of a relevant definition of optometry and patient referral criteria, and the curtailment of the delegation of optometric procedures to non-licensed or unqualified individuals. b) The reactionary position of the **Medical Profession** to our programs has been