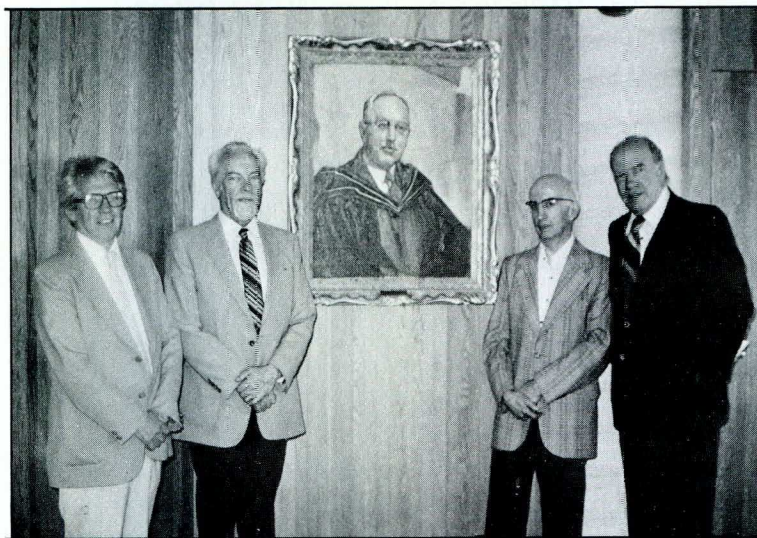


A Pause in the Long Road of Progress



Optometry, the profession, is a very young profession as an organized discipline, even though its roots go back to near antiquity. Its progenitors are to be found among the old optical instrument makers, astronomers, mathematicians and natural philosophers over the centuries.

One must recall that, 75 years ago, teaching institutions were just coming into existence, and the profession as an organized group was in its formative stage, particularly in England and the United States.

In Canada, apart from preceptorship training (ranging in length from one to six months, given either by optician-optometrists, a few suppliers of ophthalmic goods or a few oculists), no formal training existed.

Unless one is familiar with the evolution of the profession and its educational development, one cannot fully appreciate and evaluate adequately the contributions of any one individual, or group of individuals, to the development of optometric education. At any one stage of development, contributions are relative and are built upon the efforts of one's predecessors. But when the contributions of three people are compressed into the span

of less than a lifetime, a mere 40 years, such an event merits more than passing mention. It merits that all people concerned with the profession rise to do homage to Ted Fisher, Clair Bobier and Bill Lyle.

In truth, it is a unique privilege for The Canadian Journal of Optometry to dedicate this issue in honour of these three colleagues whose self-sacrifice and devotion have helped shape the destinies of optometric education and its social orientation as a primary health care discipline.

One must wonder what attracted these three young men to optometry, how did they first conceive of the profession in those bygone years? What future were they expecting for themselves and for the profession? They certainly would not have surmised the effect of their efforts and their dedication on the destinies of the profession. For they have helped raise it from near obscurity to its present level as a primary health care discipline. One must not forget that progress in any profession depends upon the quality of education dispensed to its aspiring students.

The development of optometric education was not an overnight phenomenon. It evolved slowly over

the years, as revealed by the following chronological table of events since the turn of the century:

1902 - Empire College of Ophthalmology, later to become the Royal College of Science in 1912. A major competitor to the Department of Optometry and the College of Optometry, it had expected to become the official optometric institution and, failing this, became an obstacle to the recognition of the profession.

1910 - The Quebec Optical Association opens its "Collège d'Optique".

1913 - The Quebec Association purchases a building to house the school, and extends its facilities to include a clinic.

1917 - Justice Hodgins' Report on Medical Education in Ontario recognises Optometry "as a career distinct from medicine" and implies the need for adequate educational facilities.

1921 - 1925 - Department of Optometry in the Central Technical High School offers a two-year course as an option for students.

1925 - The College of Optometry of Ontario is founded, offering a

two-year course and requiring high school graduation for admission.

- 1925 - Collège d'Optique becomes affiliated with l'Université de Montréal and changes its name to l'Ecole d'Optométrie de l'Université de Montréal.
- 1934 - Montreal school extends its professional course to two years.
- 1936 - College of Optometry of Ontario extends its course to three years. Admission requirements raised to Senior H.S. graduation with mandatory courses in science and mathematics.
- 1945 - Montreal school moves to the university campus. Course requirements are raised to two years' science and the professional course is extended to three years with the granting of the degree Licentiate in Optometric Science (L.Sc.O.).
- 1952 - University of Toronto ceases to offer courses for optometry students. College of Optometry assumes full responsibility for teaching pre-optometry and professional courses. Course is extended to four years with a Doctor of Optometry degree being offered.
- 1956 - Doctor of Optometry degrees are conferred for the first time by the College of Optometry of Ontario.
- 1962 - Brief to the Royal Commission on Health Services in Canada — the Hall Commis-

sion — a co-operative effort, but one which resulted in three different briefs being presented by The Canadian Association of Optometrists, The Ontario Association of Optometrists and The College of Optometry of Ontario, offering three different aspects on optometric care in Canada. Preparation of these briefs forced leaders and educators in Optometry to do an in-depth study of the profession, its educational structures and its social responsibilities. Although these documents presented the profession in very good perspective, the real value was the soul-searching and the synthesis of ideas they forced upon the profession. The main recommendations for Optometry — university courses and the use of diagnostic drugs.

1964 - Brief to the Medical Services Insurance Enquiry in Ontario, the Hagey Commission, reiterates the policy that Optometry is not medicine and is worthy to participate in health care insurance plans, and the need for university training.

1967 - Report of the Senate Committee, University of Waterloo, on optometric education in the University offers the opinion that optometry is a discipline worthy to be taught in a university.

1967 - July 1 — College of Optometry of Ontario officially becomes the School of Optometry, Faculty of Science, University of Waterloo. College leaves its campus at 138-140 St. George Street, Toronto, and moves all its equipment and belongings to Waterloo for September.

1969 - School of Optometry, University of Montreal, becomes a fully integrated school in the university, giving up its status as an affiliated institution.

1974 - Official opening and dedication of the Optometry Building on the north campus, University of Waterloo.

1974 - First M.Sc. in Optometry, a graduate degree, awarded to Dr. Bruce Young.

1980 - First Ph.D. awarded, to Dr. John Lovasik.

1981 - Ecole d'Optométrie, Université de Montréal awards its first graduate degree.

So with the above sketchy background of our evolution, we turn to our friends, colleagues and professional idols, having invited them to share their thoughts with us on a wide variety of subjects including where the profession is headed in the years ahead. In this interview, we sit down with an accumulation of 126 years of experience and wisdom, of devotion and self-sacrifice. The profession must not, and indeed, cannot lightly pass over this treasure trove. We hope our readers gain, as we did, from listening to them.



Optometric Education is *more* than a one month per year program. So is the Trust Fund.

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