

1987 Biennial Congress Business Meetings

1987 National/Provincial Optometric Leaders Meeting

Tuesday, August 4, was the date for one of the most significant meetings ever held by the Association — The National/Provincial Optometric Leaders Meeting.

Under the Chairmanship of CAO President-elect Dr. Tom Adamack, the purpose of the meeting was to assess **The Role and Structure of the Canadian Association of Optometrists.**

Background

This meeting was actually the continuation of a process begun last summer immediately after Dr. Scott Brisbin assumed the office of CAO President. Past President Dr. Bruce Rosner, Chairman of the Association's Advisory Committee, circulated a detailed questionnaire to a large number of current and former optometric leaders at both the national and provincial levels.

They were asked to do nothing less than evaluate the entire structure of the national Association in terms of its make-up and relationships with the provincial Associations of Optometrists.

(It might be somewhat surprising to the practising optometrist to realize that CAO's "membership" is not made up of individuals like yourself. Rather, as a federation, the Canadian Association of Optometrists actually has ten **corporate** members, the provin-

cial Associations of Optometrists from coast to coast. As a registered member of your provincial Association, you are designated to receive national Association information, via vehicles like the *CJO* * *RCO* and the *Optometrist's Desk Reference*, but your actual "membership" classification is at the provincial level, not directly with CAO.)

In terms of political activity, there are few optometrists more involved than the current leaders in each province — the President, President-elect or Vice President and, at a staff level, the Executive Director. It was with precisely this thought in mind that the participation of the provincial optometric leadership was sought this year in a joint meeting with the Council of CAO to discuss the role and structure of the national Association.

The meeting was actually Part II of the process. In Part I, as is noted above, Canadian Optometry's substantial leaders' network, past and present, was tapped via a detailed questionnaire. Now it was planned to offer the corporate members the opportunity to voice their concerns through their present leadership structure. The Agenda offered virtually no itemized procedures whatsoever save the fact that each provincial Association would have an equal opportunity at the microphones.

The Meeting

Formerly held under the title "Interaction", the 1987 National/Provincial Optometric Leaders Meeting proved to be a wide open affair. Individual presentations ranged from offering a number of highly critical specifics regarding CAO's performance, while advocating maintenance of the present federated structure, to several suggestions as to how the structure itself might be revamped.

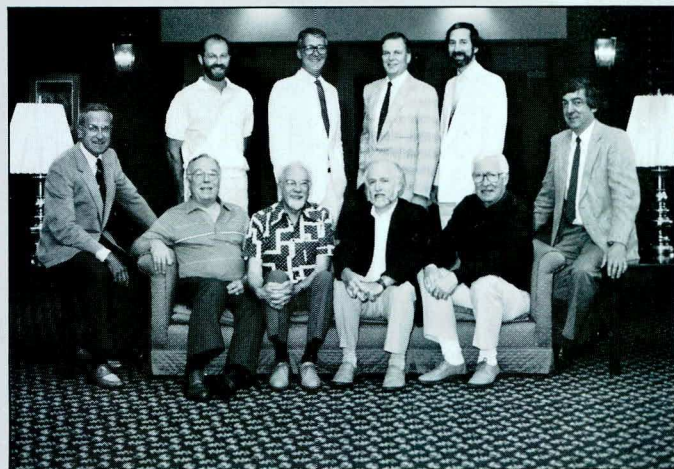
In turn, each provincial Association President reviewed the corporate member's perception of the national Association in terms of its real and potential ability to deliver member services. A number of speakers also digressed to review specific services and to offer suggestions as to how their delivery might be enhanced.

A highlight of this year's meeting as well was the provision of full on-site simultaneous services. Attendees agreed that the option of speaking in either French or English was a process which should be a regular feature at this type of national meeting. The very minor delays while the technician identified the correct microphone to activate were seen as a tiny price to pay for the opportunity to express oneself comfortably in either language.

(If the reader senses a deliberate attempt to avoid presenting any specific comments or suggestions which were reviewed at this meeting, there is a deliberate reason for this. It follows.)

A Voice From Optometry

Those general members who attended the 1987 General Business Meeting received an invitation from the CAO President to par-



Saint John also welcomed many from the gallery of CAO Presidents to this year's Congress. Seated L-R: Dr. Jack Huber (79/80), Dr. Ivan McNabb (73/75), Dr. Bill Lyle (55/57), Dr. Ralph Rosere (84/85), Dr. Hugh MacKenzie (67/69) and Dr. Hervé Landry (80/81); standing L-R: Dr. Reid MacDuff (81/82), Dr. Roland des Groseilliers (82/84), Dr. Scott Brisbin (86/present) and Dr. Bruce Rosner (85/86).

De nombreux anciens présidents de l'ACO ont assisté au Congrès de cette année, à Saint-Jean. Assis, de gauche à droite: le Dr Jack Huber (1979-1980), le Dr Ivan McNabb (1973-1975); le Dr Bill Lyle (1955-1957), le Dr Ralph Rosere (1984-1985), le Dr Hugh Mackenzie (1967-1969) et le Dr Hervé Landry (1980-1981); debout, de gauche à droite: le Dr Reid MacDuff (1981-1982), le Dr Roland des Groseilliers (1982-1984), le Dr Scott Brisbin (1986 à ce jour) et le Dr. Bruce Rosner (1985-1986).

ticipate in the same process which formed the basis for the National/Provincial Optometric Leaders Meeting.

If you have any comments or suggestions at all, whether you were present at the Saint John General Business Meeting or not, as to how you feel the role and structure of the national Association — CAO — might be enhanced or altered to better suit the needs of the individual optometrists of Canada, Dr. Brisbin is inviting you to direct your comments to him personally, in care of the CAO offices in Ottawa, Suite 301, 1785 Alta Vista Drive, K1G 3Y6.

Questions you may want to consider: Do you feel you're getting a fair exchange for your CAO dues and, if not, how would you suggest the situation be altered to enable this to happen? Do you support the idea of "federation", i.e. one vote per provincial Association, or would you prefer to see a form of "regionalization" with representation adjusted to reflect the number of optometrists practising in Atlantic Canada, Québec, Ontario and Western Canada? Or would you support a further delineation to structure the national Association based on direct membership by each optometrist on an individual basis?

Thank you, in advance, for your contribution to the process of self evaluation presently being undertaken by CAO. As Dr. Brisbin summed up following the Leaders Meeting, the national Association's strength is in its members' satisfaction with the service it provides. A silently dissatisfied member is of no benefit whatsoever and only by hearing your suggestions can CAO evolve to be an even more effective organization for the optometrists of Canada.

1987 General Business Meeting

It has been said that an Annual Meeting (or Biennial Meeting) is the bane of any corporation — a necessary evil required by the Constitution.

For the past several Congresses, however, CAO has taken significant steps towards injecting much more relevance into the process for the ordinary members who attend. As has already been noted, at this year's GBM, Dr. Brisbin outlined the process through which CAO has been going to review its own role and structure. He concluded the presentation by requesting written input from the practising OD's in Canada.

In addition, however, this year the meeting provided a forum for two very distinguished guests to address Optometry from an international perspective. Dr. John Tumblin, President of the American Optometric Association, offered a review of the political and practice issues presently facing practitioners in the United States. As has been Canada's experience, one can't lie next to an elephant without feeling every twitch and Dr. Tumblin's review of present day US concerns — therapeutic pharmaceutical agents in particular — undoubtedly flagged a number of this country's future issues.

Meanwhile, a thought-provoking look from another perspective was provided by Dr. G. Burt Holmes, President of the International Optometric and Optical League (IOOL). Dr. Holmes outlined conditions in some countries where optometric vision services to Canada's standards are a distant dream. On behalf of the League, he asked Canada and Canadian OD's to continue our support of their programs, not only in those areas aimed at increasing international professional standards of practice, but also in those areas of humanitarian voluntary service by which people in underdeveloped countries receive basic vision and eye

care services. It proved to be a real reminder of how health care services have evolved in Canada and how minor our "issues" can seem when set against those of people who have no options.

1987 Election of CAO Officers

Yet another Congress tradition — the passing of the gavel — was conspicuously absent from the 1987 Biennial Congress. It was replaced by the huge ovation which greeted Dr. Scott Brisbin's announcement at the closing banquet that he had decided to seek a second term as CAO President.

Earlier that day, in a smaller but no less enthusiastic ovation, the Council of CAO had also welcomed the decision and confirmed the extension of the present Executive's mandate by acclaiming the full slate of incumbents for a second term:

President:

Dr. Scott Brisbin,
Edmonton, Alberta

President-elect:

Dr. Tom Adamack,
Fernie, BC

Secretary-Treasurer:

Dr. Jean-Marie Rodrigue,
Montréal, Québec

Past President:

Dr. Bruce Rosner,
Winnipeg, Manitoba.

In acknowledging the results, Dr. Brisbin said that his goal is to see through a number of programs begun under his first term, including the honing of CAO's Political Action Program, the initiation of a Canadian Optometric Advocates' Program and the expansion of the national Association's programs of internal and external communication.

Saint John 1987 now joins 19 previous CAO Congresses in the Association's history. While the Greatest Little City in the East gave us a superlative venue for a truly memorable event, the shaping of that final success is surely due to the tireless efforts of Local Arrangements Committee Chairperson Dr. Barbara Iftody and the optometrists and spouses of New Brunswick.

Geographically, New Brunswick is the closest part of Atlantic Canada to the rest of the country (unless, of course you dwell along the Québec/Labrador border). But in many, many other ways, our 1987 Congress experience drew New Brunswick and its people even closer to us.

A Merry-Tyme Mingle, indeed!

Some 1987 Biennial Congress Statistics

Registrants:	CAO Members (Optometrists):	312
	Spouses:	159
	Junior Delegates (age 6 or under):	37
	(age 6-12):	44
	(age 12 or over):	23
	Students of Optometry:	3
	National/Provincial Staff:	9
TOTAL		587
Exhibitors:	Number of Booths Reserved:	63
	Number of Companies (Commercial):	48
	Number of Non-profit Organizations:	4