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GUEST EDITORIAL

John E. K. Foreman
Faculty of Engineering Science,
University of Western Ontario, London 72, Ontario.
Chairman, Canadian Committee on Acoustics

Committee, Association or Society?

This year marks the eleventh anniversary of the meeting of a group which was later to become known as the Canadian Committee on Acoustics. The editorial in the January 1973 issue of the Newsletter by Tony Embleton gave a brief outline of the history and activity of the Committee since its inception. At the 1970 meeting of the CCA at The University of Western Ontario, there was a general consensus that the time had arrived whereby a reassessment of the structure of the Committee was needed; it was generally felt that, although considerable benefits and useful exchange had resulted over the years through the annual informal meetings of the Committee, its responsibilities as a group, knowledgeable about acoustics and its wide spectrum of applications in Canada, might be better met if the group was more formally organized. Further, a formal arrangement for operation of the CCA could result in improved communication between the Committee and branches of government, municipalities, industry and the universities which have an interest in acoustics and its applications. As a

consequence, for example, a better mechanism should develop whereby problem areas of an acoustical nature involving technological and social issues could be identified--and recommendations for corrective measures subsequently made.

Acoustics is a fragmented field of research in many countries, and particularly in Canada. By its very nature, acoustics is interdisciplinary in character and crosses traditional academic boundaries and disciplines. It is not exclusively concerned with air-borne noise, but embraces studies in general vibrations, underwater acoustics, electro-acoustics, geophysics, the use of ultra-sound as an analytical tool, speech pathology and audiology, and others. Moreover, there appears to be insufficient integrated research in acoustics and its applications; even less is being done in the way of teaching of fundamental and applied acoustics at Canadian universities and colleges which, in the opinion of many, is a serious deficiency in our academic programs.

At the meeting of the CCA at McGill University last October, a proposal for a study committee on acoustics in Canada, prepared by the executive and addressed to some of the problems as outlined above, was considered by the membership. Although it was felt that an in-depth study on acoustics in Canada might provide valuable information and certain guidelines for development in the future, there was reservation expressed at the meeting as to whether there was a need for a study of such scope at that particular time. There was also some concern about the method by which a study of this nature would be undertaken and reported, and there was the inevitable question of finding financial support for such a study. But it was nevertheless agreed that the CCA was the only broadly based organization existing in Canada at the present time which brings together, through meetings and personal exchange, the acoustic community and its diverse interests and activities. Recognizing that every effort should be made to improve communications between those working in acoustics in Canada, the membership then approved a proposal for the initiation of this Newsletter.

Where do we go from here? Is it logical at this point, with over 150 members, to refer to our group as a "committee"? Have we not reached the stage where we may at least be allowed the privilege of identifying our activities with those of an "association"? Certainly, Committee seems to be a poor description of what we now have and what we now do, and a change in the name of the group, with, perhaps, a constitution, an enlarged executive, and active standing or ad hoc committees should be in order at this point. These committees might be concerned with membership, publicity and publications, and programs (annual or regional conferences?). The committees, for example, might also provide specialized input in dealing with issues involving acoustics in technology, urban community life, or government legislation. These would all seem to

be positive steps toward achieving certain objectives as previously outlined.

On the other hand, there are many who would advocate constituting the group in Canada as a technical society, along the lines of other contemporary societies or, in the case of CCA, as a parallel in Canada to the Acoustical Society of America. Perhaps a recommendation to the ASA for the formation of a Canadian branch of this society would best meet the needs. It is not clear in my mind, however, what advantages may be associated with a technical society (dealing presumably with acoustical matters of a technical nature) as compared with a more general association of individuals and groups whose activities directly or indirectly embrace acoustics.

The agenda for the next annual meeting of the CCA, to be held at the National Research Council in Ottawa on October 18 and 19, 1973 (following the Community Noise Seminars sponsored by the Division of Physics of NRC), is now being drafted. I would hope that each of you who attend this meeting would come prepared to comment during the business session on the possibilities which I have outlined for restructuring of the Committee. I would welcome written comments on this matter at any time.

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ACOUSTICS AT CRIQ

Daryl May and Gilles Crépeau
Centre de Recherche Industrielle du Québec
572, avenue Orly,
c.p. 2090, Dorval 780, Québec

Assisting Quebec industry is the goal of Centre de Recherche Industrielle du Québec, a provincial-government corporation recently set up in Quebec City, in Dorval (near Montreal) and in Sherbrooke, under its director-general, Mr. Michel Normandin. CRIQ's technical divisions include an industrial mechanics section inside which is an acoustics group.

Acoustics at CRIQ is, of course, oriented towards industrial needs. Broadly the activities can be divided into two areas. The first is to deal with industrial noise problems. The second is to develop acoustics products for industry to produce itself. Although CRIQ's acoustics section got under way only about a year ago, work in both these areas has grown to quite significant proportions. While many of the details are naturally confidential and only the client may disclose them, some broad evidence of progress may be given here.

Dealing with existing industrial problems has involved working with industrial clients to quieten noisy product lines. These activities are becoming increasingly challenging with the coincidence of the tendency for the public to demand quieter products and the tendency for manufacturers to want to sell lightweight