

Canadian Geoscience Council President's Report -1975

R. L. Slavin

Volume 3, numéro 1, february 1976

URI : https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/geocan03_01rep01

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

The Geological Association of Canada

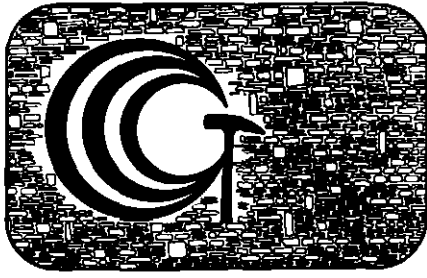
ISSN

0315-0941 (imprimé)
unknown (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer cet article

Slavin, R. L. (1976). Canadian Geoscience Council President's Report -1975. *Geoscience Canada*, 3(1), 4-5.



Canadian Geoscience Council President's Report - 1975

R. L. Slavin
Mobil Oil Canada Ltd.
P.O. Box 800
Calgary, Alberta T6P 0S2

Note. The Canadian Geoscience Council is an organization which exists "... to foster close relationships among the earth science learned societies and professional associations in Canada and to foster the development of the geosciences in the best interests of both the members of the constituent associations and the Canadian nation as a whole". The Geological Association of Canada is one of the member associations.

This year was a benchmark in the short history of our unique coordinating council for it brought us full recognition as the strong and influential voice of geoscience in Canada. It was also a year when we continued to make important progress towards our major goals: fostering close relationships among the various geoscience societies; promoting development of our science in the best interests of the nation; improving geoscience education; and providing advice to government on science policy.

Recognition as an influential voice for geoscience came mainly through our report *The Geosciences in Canada—1974* prepared last year and published early this year. The report received wide distribution within the earth science community and was sent to appropriate

members of the Federal and Provincial cabinets, to the Presidents of all Canadian universities and to such national groups as SCITEC, the National Research Council and the Science Council of Canada. The recommendations and conclusions of the report formed the basis for fruitful discussions with the Honorable C. M. Drury, Minister of State for Science and Technology, the Honorable D. S. Macdonald, Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, and Dr. W. G. Schneider, President of the National Research Council, and their senior advisors.

In these meetings, Council stressed the importance of the geosciences to Canada's welfare in view of the country's needs in energy, minerals, food production and the care of the natural environment. Specific recommendations were made for additional support to research in the geosciences and increased funding at the universities; and for representation by earth scientists on various boards, councils and granting agencies that seek solutions to national problems where geoscience plays an important part. In the meetings with the two Federal cabinet ministers, we expressed concern about the possible loss of Canadian experts in the resource industries and a subsequent decrease in enrolment in geoscience at the universities because of differences in attitude among the Federal and Provincial governments and Industry on resource policy. Council offered no solution to this political matter, but urged a speedy solution in the best interests of Canada.

As a result of these meetings with senior government officials, Council was invited to and did submit the names of a number of distinguished geoscientists who will be considered for appointment to the Science Council of Canada, the National Research Council and the Grants Allocation Committee of NRC. Council also has been invited by the Science and Technology Division of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources to nominate a number of earth scientists to a special Advisory Committee for the Geological Survey of Canada.

An important objective of Council is to encourage among Canadians an appreciation of the cultural and economic importance of the

geosciences to Canada. This objective was strongly advanced during the past year under the enthusiastic leadership of Dr. Gordon Winder. Assisted by a grant from the Canadian Geological Foundation, the CGC sponsored two weekend workshops in geoscience for high school teachers, one in Calgary organized by Dr. C. Yorath and the Education Committee of the Canadian Society of Petroleum Geologists, and one in Wolfville, Nova Scotia, organized by Dr. R. MacNeill of the Atlantic Geoscience Council. Both workshops were very successful; consideration is being given to sponsoring similar workshops elsewhere in Canada in 1976. The Education Committee also updated and republished Council's Resource Document for Teachers which lists material and people available to assist in earth science education at the high school level.

With the cooperation of a number of member societies, the CGC has sponsored several workshops on geoscience subjects that spanned the interests of several member societies. We sponsored a Computer Workshop in Geology in association with the 1975 Geological Association of Canada / Mineralogical Association of Canada Annual Meeting at Waterloo. The previous year Council sponsored a workshop for geoscientists interested in international development, again in conjunction with the GAC/MAC Annual Meeting. The cooperation of these two member societies in making their secretariats available for the organization of such meetings is greatly appreciated. Council's first major scientific meeting, "Exploration '77, a symposium to present the role of geophysical and geochemical methods in the search for base metals and uranium", will be held in Ottawa in 1977. Planning and organization are well advanced under Chairman Dr. A. G. Darnley. Exploration '77 will be a follow-up to the successful Symposium on Geophysics and Groundwater held at Niagara Falls in 1967 which was sponsored by the former Associate Committee for Geodesy and Geophysics. Council undertook to sponsor the 1977 meeting because the multi-disciplinary nature of the symposium extends beyond the prime interests of any single member society.

As in the cases of the earlier workshops we have sponsored, this event will stand alone, with no plans for continuity or repetition. Council is well aware that it must not sponsor technical meetings that may interfere with the plans of its member societies.

An important concern of the Canadian Geoscience Council is that there be in the future a sufficient number of earth scientists to satisfy Canada's needs. A committee under the Chairmanship of Peter Savage has been formed to investigate: 1) levels of enrolment in the geosciences in Canada, 2) the disposition of recent graduates to careers, and 3) estimates of future job availability. Data on some of these subjects are available in a number of member societies and in other agencies. The committee hopes to coordinate these data and interpret them in the broad context of Canada's future needs for geoscientists.

Council broadened its organizational base during the past year by providing for representation on Council by earth science groups which would have non-voting Associate status. The Committee of Chairmen of Canadian University Departments of Earth Science has accepted such status, as has a senior officer representing the earth sciences within the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. Council is still seeking some way to bring a voice from the provincial Departments of Mines and Petroleum to its deliberations without making Council unwieldy, and while preserving its status as an association of societies.

As a follow-up to Council's successful report of 1974, the decision has been taken to prepare a new report on the State of the Geosciences in Canada - 1976. The new report will remove some of the unevenness of the first report, strive for more objectivity and provide for a greater participation by member societies than was possible under the tight schedule of 1974. Dr. C. Barnes has accepted Chairmanship of this Editorial Committee and is well along in planning and organization. For 1975, the CGC report will be a review of current research in the geosciences with commentary on both geological and geophysical research, and an overview of geological research in one particular segment of earth science, the petroleum industry. This last subject will be based

upon an in-depth review presently being completed by the Canadian Society of Petroleum Geologists. With respect to the already existing Geological Survey of Canada report "Current Research in the Geological Sciences", the CGC committee is working with the GSC to attempt to improve the input and to computerize the data so that it is more readily accessible. This is a major project for the CGC in 1975.

International non-governmental relations in the geosciences are at the present time coordinated through NRC and EM&R. There are indications, however, that government agencies wish to vest this responsibility with the scientific societies. Council has accepted in principle a proposal by the Academy of Science of the Royal Society that the Royal Society act as an umbrella organization to meet this need: the Royal Society would be the adhering body to the International Council of Scientific Unions and would be the initial contact for and coordinate the activities of such discipline groups as the International Union for Geological Science and the International Union for Geodesy and Geophysics. In accepting the Royal Society's proposal in principle, Council itself expects to represent the special interests of the geosciences in consultation with the member societies most directly concerned. However, one of our member societies, the Canadian Geophysical Union, feels very strongly that it should be the direct contact with the Royal Society umbrella organization for the IUGG rather than working through CGC. The matter of this representation remains to be resolved.

The Canadian Geoscience Council has now achieved national stature as a voice for geoscience. It is known and respected by government, the scientific community at large and such national bodies as SCITEC, the National Research Council and the Science Council of Canada. We ourselves as geoscientists are well aware of the impact of our science on our own lives and the country's welfare and of the importance our science will have for the future supply of energy, minerals, water, food, and for the rational preservation of our natural environment. Council will best serve its member societies and indeed, our country, by making everyone more aware of the cultural and economic values of the geosciences; by improving education and increasing

research; by assuring that the necessary number of geoscientists will be available when needed; and by presenting a voice for our science in shaping the future.

Definite progress has been made toward these objectives through the cooperation of the member societies and the dedicated work of their representatives on Council. Much of our success results from the mix of councillors from the different sub-disciplines and from industry, university and public sectors which brings a necessary and valuable perspective to Council's deliberations. The Canadian Geoscience Council, however, only reflects the views and aspirations of its members. The societies must therefore continue to send knowledgeable and astute representatives to Council to continue the advancement of geoscience in Canada.

MS received December 3, 1975.

Note
We regret the following mistakes made in Volume 2, Number 4: the title of A. D. Miall's article (p. 193) should read "Computer Applications in Stratigraphic and Sedimentary Geology: Notes from an Iconoclast"; on page 222 the title for the book review should be "Reading the Rocks - The Story of The Geological Survey of Canada 1842-1972" (Ed.).