



THE ENGINEERING INSTITUTE OF CANADA

and its member societies

L'Institut canadien des ingénieurs

et ses sociétés membres

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“The early years of CSCE and the name change to EIC”

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The Canadian Society of Civil Engineers was, through its 1887 Charter, given power to make By-Laws and Regulations for its governance and administration and for the upholding of the honour and dignity of the profession. The By-Laws also made it clear that the term 'civil' included all types of engineering activity other than military. The founding president - Thomas Keefer - was supported by vice-presidents Casimir Gzowski, John Kennedy and Walter Shanly. The Society's first headquarters were in Montreal, at McGill University, where the secretary/treasurer – Henry Bovey – was Dean of Applied Science. But they were soon moved to a series of off campus locations in the heart of the city.

Those who lived within 50 miles of the headquarters were deemed to be 'residents', and the others 'non-residents.' In 1887 and 1888, each resident in the Member grade paid annual fees of \$8, and non-residents \$6. The corresponding fees for Associate Members were \$6 and \$4, and all Students paid \$1. In January 1889, the Member and Associate Member fees were raised by \$2 and the Student fees by \$1.

The By-Laws also made provision for the formation of branches across the country. Their members were classified as 'residents' and paid the appropriate fees, the difference between the resident and non-resident levels being rebated to the branches. The first branch was formed in Toronto in 1890 and operated until discontinued in 1893. It was revived in 1906. The second was formed in Cape Breton in 1905. It, too, was discontinued not long afterwards but was not reformed until 1921. By 1910 there were branches in Quebec City, Ottawa, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver. Also by 1910 the Society's membership had increased almost ten-fold, from 288 to 2750, including 550 Members, 950 Associate Members, and 1200 Students. There were then four 'discipline' sections in operation - for general (civil), electrical, mechanical and mining engineering. Papers read before branch meetings or at headquarters meetings in Montreal could be submitted for publication in the Society's **TRANSACTIONS**, which appeared semi-annually. Not surprisingly, the majority of those read during the first dozen years of the CSCE's activities were on civil engineering subjects. As the headquarters city, Montreal was not among the early branches to be formed and had to wait until February 1918 for this to happen - a matter of weeks before CSCE officially changed its name to the Engineering Institute of Canada. Walter J. Francis, who was elected president of the Engineering Institute in 1924, was the founding chairman of this branch.

The first two decades of the 20th century saw growth in the numbers of university-educated engineers and a reduction in the average age of the Society's membership as a whole. During World War I, the member numbers changed little from the 3000 figure for 1914. But by the end of the conflict, almost 1000 had served in the armed forces. Over 100 of them received decorations, but an equal number were killed in action or died of wounds received on active service. The War also presented opportunities for new engineering activities in Canada, many of them in the electrical and mechanical fields, and many of them associated with the mass production of munitions and other war materials and with the manufacture of goods no longer available from abroad. The relatively dominant position of those resident in the Montreal area also declined as Society activities spread across the country.

Around the mid-way point in World War I there was a feeling within CSCE that the Society was not meeting the needs of a growing number of the younger members of the profession, and especially those in the electrical and mechanical disciplines. Its published papers were also criticized for providing too much description and too little theory. Semi-annual publication of the **TRANSACTIONS** was discouraging authors from submitting texts they wished to appear in print with a minimum of delay; so they were turning to other non-Canadian vehicles. Aware of these

and other problems, the CSCE Council asked its Committee on Society Affairs, chaired by H.E.T. Haultain, to study the situation and to report. It did so in 1917, recommending a number of significant changes. Among them were a name change for the Society that reflected the increasing diversity and interests of the membership, the publication of a monthly magazine to improve communications within the Society and to allow the **TRANSACTIONS** to carry more theoretical material, and the appointment of a full-time secretary to handle the increasing administrative load that was coming with a larger potential membership.

The name change was accomplished by the amendment of the 1887 Charter by Parliament. CSCE became the Engineering Institute of Canada in April 1918. The first issue of the **ENGINEERING JOURNAL** appeared a month later. And with the full blessing of his part-time predecessor, a full-time secretary was appointed. The Institute's objectives remained essentially the same as those of the Society.

(This historical note was based on the paper **THE ORIGINAL CANADIAN SOCIETY OF CIVIL ENGINEERS** by Andrew H. Wilson, which appeared in Volume 1 of the **PROCEEDINGS** of the Canadian Society for Civil Engineering Conference held at Sherbrooke, Quebec, in 1997.)

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