

News from the Federations...

by Jean-Claude Robert, CHA Council member responsible for SSFC-SSHRC-CFH

Canadian Federation for the Humanities

Last November marked the CHA's first formal participation in the administrative council of the CFH since we joined the organization last summer. At this meeting, the CHA's representative, Jean-Claude Robert was invited to take part in a new rite known as "Annual Lobby Day". Each Council member is assigned a number of senators and members of parliament and armed with an imposing "Briefing Book", valiantly attempts to convince them during individual meetings to support the CFH's mandate. In November, we lobbied for the importance and recognition of the humanities in this country and tried to convince our representatives to support increased funding to SSHRC's budget and that of the Arts Council. This activity was mainly to sensitize government representatives and senators to specific problems in the study of the humanities. In that respect, the objective was attained. It was acknowledged that there was a lack of communication between the "humanists" and the politicians - this is also true for the social sciences. Generally, our projects are unknown, if not purely and simply made fun of.

Other large dossiers occupying the CFH are relatively the same as those of the SSFC. Actually, both federations generally act as a team and at each of their respective Council meetings, the President of the other federation gives a detailed report of the life and activities of his federation.

Social Science Federation of Canada

In December 1990, the SSFC tabled its brief to the Administrative Council of the Canadian Museum of Civilization. This report follows a request by the CHA for the SSFC to become more involved in the question of the status of research in museums. We are awaiting the museum's official reaction to the brief's proposal of forming an advisory committee on research. The museum issue is one that preoccupies the CHA and we are monitoring the situation closely.

Since December 1990, the Federation has a new Executive Director, Dr. Ayman Yassini who replaces Dr. Steen B. Esbensen who has returned to his academic position. The new Executive Director is a political scientist specializing in the area of international relations. Dr. Yassini has an extensive background in academic affairs

and management of non-governmental organizations.

At its March 1991 meeting, the SSFC organised a workshop on the question of the popularization of social science research. Panelists underlined the importance for social science researchers to elaborate a strategy of communication that not only covers learned publications (books or articles) but also encompasses the reporting of essential research results in simple language accessible to the general public. There are many reasons to attempt this, not only for the fundamental defence of research financing but also for the social importance of making the research known as well as the moral obligation of the researcher. The discussion allowed the ambiguities of the policies of grantors (SSHRC) to come to light. On the one hand, these granting institutions want to promote the diffusion and on the other, are considering reducing the level of subsidies for the diffusion of "learned" works. Similarly, granting organisations should (as universities are doing) keep track of "non-learned" publications when evaluating a candidate.

The Royal Society of Canada has recently tabled its report on university research. The document contains 23 recommendations for the Ministry of Science including those designed to significantly increase SSHRC's budget (from \$65 to \$263 million), to see to the increase in the subsidized proportion of scholars, to ensure the proper framework for graduate students and the existence of sufficient bursary programmes for the replacement of researchers. Other recommendations highlight the need for consultation between provinces, mobility of academics in Canada and the ease of women's access to the academic professions. The dossier will be followed closely by the SSFC who will also ensure that this report not "sleep on the shelf", regardless of present budgetary restrictions.

A topic of interest for 1991: the Aid to Scholarly Publications Programme funded by the SSHRC and administered by the two federations. This is an essential programme for Canadian historians because without it, very few historical works would be published. This programme will be re-evaluated during the year by SSHRC.



Miscellany

The American Historical Association has awarded its Paul Birdsall Prize to **Brian Villa** of the University of Ottawa for his book *Unauthorized Action: Mountbatten and the Dieppe Raid* (Oxford University, 1989). Villa attempts to determine responsibility for the disastrous raid on Dieppe and names a list of leaders from Mountbatten to Churchill.

Paul E. Lovejoy, professor of history at York and Associate Vice-President of Research has been appointed to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council for a three year term.

The Dance Collection Danse (DCD), an **Archives of Canadian theatrical dance**, is using a DeskTop Archives System to transform their print and image archives into an electronic format. The first phase of the project includes a series of working demonstrations open to professionals associated with archives, arts organizations, museums and libraries. The project is made possible through the loan of hardware and software from Commodore Business Machines, Open Text Systems, Siemens Electric and funds from the Ontario and federal governments. For more information contact Lawrence Adams, Co-Director, Dance Collection Danse, 145 George Street, Toronto, ON, M5A 2M6; 416-365-3233.

Two Hundred 'Irish Fenians' will do battle with 100 Canadians in re-enacting the 1866 Battle of Ridgeway, June 15-16 on the 12 acres surrounding the Ridgeway Battlefield Museum. Direct inquiries to Rich Woods, Ridgeway Battlefield Museum, P.O. Box 339, Ridgeway, ON, L0S 1N0; 416-894-5322.