NEWSLETTER

CHA Lobbies Parliament on Museums

by Marianne McLean

On October 17, the CHA presented its brief proposing amendments to Bill C-12, an act respecting museums to the members of Parliament reviewing the legislation. President Jean-Claude Robert and Past Presidents Blair Neatby and Pierre Savard represented the Association before the Parliamentary Committee on Culture. The CHA brief focused on the Canadian Museum of Civilization and argued that research was fundamental to the museum's mandate. The CHA suggested amendments strengthening the research function of the museum and called for the creation of an Advisory Board composed of senior scholars to be responsible for the review of long-range plans and major exhibitions proposed for the museum.

Members of the Committee were not generally favourable to the CHA's proposals which seem to have been considered too radical a change to the legislation; one M.P. complained that the CHA was rather inappropriately

proposing the creation of a research institute rather than a museum. An exception to this unsympathetic hearing was found in John Brewin's response to the CHA brief. Brewin applauded the expression of interest by a professional association in the museum and suggested that the CHA continue to lobby for the proposed Advisory Board with the Board of Trustees after the Bill becomes law and trustees are appointed.

A separate brief presented by the Professional Institute of the Public Service, the union representing historians and other researchers in the museum, was less radical in the amendments which it proposed to Bill C-12 and met with greater success. PIPS also argued in favour of a stronger research function in all the national museums; subsequently, the government proposed changes to

INSIDE

Putting the Historical Use of Computers on a sound Foundation

by José Igartua

Last spring, the CHA set up a committee on computing to follow up on the recommendations contained in the Bouchard report, which appeared in the Winter 1989 issue of the *Newsletter*. The committee is headed by José E. Igartua, of the Université du Québec à Montréal. It met for the first time during the Learned Societies meeting in Quebec City last June. The committee defined its primary task as that of drafting proposals to be submitted to CHA Council regarding the various applications of computing to the teaching of history and to historical research. The proposals will be submitted at the November 1990 meeting of the Council.

Before submitting its formal proposals to Council, the committee will draft a preliminary report which will be put to the membership at a session at the 1990 annual meeting in Victoria. The final report will take into account the suggestions and comments made in Victoria.

The committee consists of four sub-committees, which have specific duties:

1) **Sub-committee on rules concerning the development of databases and software**

This sub-committee is headed by Gérard Bouchard, of the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi. Its other members are Chad Gaffield, of the University of Ottawa, Ian Winchester, of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, and Michael Gervers, Scarborough College, University of Toronto. The proposals drafted by this sub-committee should guide the CHA in setting up guidelines and in its dealings with granting agencies. Part A of the Bouchard report outlines in more detail the mandate of this sub-committee.

2) **Sub-committee on user services**

This sub-committee is headed by Ken Coates, of the University of Victoria. José E. Igartua, of the Université du Québec à Montréal, is also a member. This sub-committee will propose ways of disseminating technical information of use to the historians' community, as well as means of sharing experiences in the handling of computerized historical data. Part B of the Bouchard report gives examples of what is being considered.

3) **Sub-committee on rules concerning conservation and access to machine-readable historical data**

Saving History From Endangerment

Good Canadians: Developments in the Teaching of History in Schools Since 1960", <u>Journal of Canadian Studies</u>, Vol. 22, No. 3 (Fall, 1987), pp. 104-127.

2 Alan Skeoch, "Narcissism or Nihilism - A Little of Both", Discussion Paper, OHASSTA, May, 1982, typescript, p. 2.

3 Ministry of Education Briefing, February 27, 1984. Author's notes.

4 Desmond Morton, Michael Wayne and Paul Rutherford, "Canada in a North American Perspective", Draft Outline, May 2, 1984.

5 Curriculum Guideline, <u>History and Contemporary Studies</u>, Parts A, B and C (Toronto: Ministry of Education, 1986).

6 See, for example, the reactions of OHASSTA and the Ontario Independent School History Teachers' Association in <u>Rapport</u>, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Spring, 1984), pp. 24-30; and Vol. 6, No. 3 (Autumn, 1985), Guideline reaction issue.

7 The four new texts are: Paul W. Bennett, Cornelius Jaenen, Nick Brune and Alan Skeoch, <u>Canada: A North American Nation</u> (McGraw Hill Ryerson, 1988); James R. Christopher, <u>The North Americans</u> (Oxford University Press, 1988); Ronald Kirbyson et al, <u>Canada in a North American Perspective</u> (Prentice-Hall Canada, 1989); and Arthur Haberman, <u>The Making of the Modern Age</u>, Second Edition (Gage Publishers, 1987) with a supplementary book of readings.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Historical Use of Computers

Gordon Darroch, a sociologist at York University, heads this sub-committee, of which the other member is Sue Gavrel, of the Government Archives Division of the National Archives of Canada. This sub-committee will make proposals to encourage the conservation of machine-readable data gathered for historical research or teaching. Proposals will bear not only on technical questions but also on changes to be made to professional practices concerning the evaluation of teaching, of research, and of publishing. Part C of the Bouchard report indicates the kinds of issues before the sub-committee.

4) Sub-committee on computers in teaching

This sub-committee is made up of Gail Campbell, of the University of New Brunswick at Moncton, who heads the sub-committee, and Marc Vallières, of Université Laval. They will look at current practices and will propose measures to disseminate information on educational software, on data bases, on application software, and on the pedagogical considerations of using computers for the teaching of history.

THE COMMITTEE'S ACTIVITIES

The committee has proposed two sessions for the next meeting in Victoria. One will be the panel on the sub-committees' reports, which will be discussed before the membership. The other will bear on the teaching of history with computers; it will include a presentation of two software packages, one in European history and the other in American history, each of which has adopted a particular pedagogical outlook.

At the committee's suggestion, the CHA President has written to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada to urge that the rules governing the conservation and sharing of data gathered through its grants be maintained when the research grants programme is revised.

The committee has set up a mainframe-based communications network which allows its members to share information and documents. This network may be opened, on request, to other members of the CHA; please contact the computing committee's chairman.

CAN WE TALK?

The committee on computing would love to have your views, comments, and suggestions regarding the issues before it. Please get in touch with the person in charge of the appropriate sub-committee or with the committee chairman.

President: José E. Igartua, département d'histoire, Université du Québec à Montréal, Montréal, PQ, H3C 3P8; (514) 987-8312; E-MAIL R12270@UQAM.CA

Sub-committee 1: Gérard Bouchard, SOREP, Université du Québec à Chicoutimi, Chicoutimi, PQ, G7H 2B1; (418) 545-5517; E-MAIL BOUCHARD@ UQAC.UQUEBEC.CA

Sub-committee 2: Ken Coates, Department of History, University of Victoria, Victoria, BC, V8W 2Y2; (604) 721-7395; E-MAIL KCOATES@UVUNIX.CA

Sub-committee 3: Gordon Darroch, Department of Sociology, York University, North York, ON, M3J 1P3; (416) 736-5015; E-MAIL DARROCH@YORKVM1.CA

Sub-committee 4: Gail Campbell, Department of History, University of New Brunswick, P.O. Box 4400, Frederiction, NB, E3B 5A3; E-MAIL AA73@UNB.CA