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At the Meetings

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AT THE MEETINGS

The Kingston Conference. . .

The first national conference on the history of Canadian science and technology successfully ran its course on 3-5 November in Kingston, Ontario. Over a year in the planning, the conference was the culmination of four years of informal and formal meetings of historians and archivists. The organizers, Norman Ball, C.E.S. Franks, Jean-Claude Guédon, Bruce Sinclair, and chairman A.W. Tickner, did an admirable job in arranging a valuable and intensive weekend.

We were all pleased and encouraged to see nearly 150 participants; drawn from all academic fields, from education, libraries, government, and industry, the group was a yeasty mixture. One disappointment was the dearth of Canadian historians who have yet to discover us. While the participants were largely drawn from the Toronto-Ottawa-Montréal triangle, it was a pleasure to see scholars from Victoria to Halifax.

Highlights of the Conference:

- Keynote addresses by Trevor Levere (Toronto) and Raymond Duchesne (Montréal) drew attention to the uniqueness of Canadian science. Levere pointed out how Canadian science in the 19th century differed from both British and American models, while Duchesne noted the differences between franco-phone and anglophone medical practice in the 19th century as a probe to discern the differences in style.
- Papers by Yves Mougéot (HSSRC), who showed that very few grants had been made for our subject by the Canada Council due to the few applications, by Ian Montagnes (University of Toronto Press), who pointed out the pitfalls of historical writing for publication, and by Hugh Wynne-Edwards (MOSST) who gave us a vision of a Canadian science and technology badly in need of guidance.
- A session on archival resources for Canadian science and technology, with papers by Peter Gillis (PAC), who discussed governmental records for sawdust pollution in Canada, by Jacques Bernier (Laval), who noted the problems in researching the history of medicine in early Quebec, and by Skip Ray (York), who described the valuable sources for history of science and technology in the Hudson's Bay Company papers.
- A wide variety of workshops--each with a paper, commentary, and discussion--covered museology, history of medicine, teaching materials and course organization, archives and, on a more theoretical level, innovation and adaptation, discovery and invention, and institutional frameworks for science and technology.
- A delightful after-dinner talk by J.W.T. Spinks, former

president of the University of Saskatchewan, on his battles with the scientific bureaucracy in Canada.

The last day was taken up with a plenary session in which rapporteurs from each workshop reported on their respective discussions. From the general discussion, a number of recommendations and new initiatives emerged. Activities that will carry on beyond the conference include:

1. An unanimous resolution sent to the Hon. John Roberts, Secretary of State, deploring the loss of the Robert Bell Papers from the Public Archives, and strongly urging that they be recovered. The conference demanded that a clear archival policy for scientific and technical material be enunciated by the government. The intelligence concerning this gross oversight was brought to the conference's attention by Prof Alan Richardson of Western.
2. The medical history workshop reported renewed interest in a newsletter for historians of Canadian medicine, and hopes for a special conference on their subject at the time of the 1979 Learned Societies Conference at Saskatoon.
3. The general encouragement for an idea introduced by John Farley (Dalhousie) for short-courses or chautauquas (along the lines of those given by the National Science Foundation in the USA) for teachers who wish to get an intensive training in the history of Canadian science and technology.
4. The educational workshops, frustrated by the lack of a good textbook and other teaching materials for students, struck a committee to work on a series of modules on aspects of Canadian science and technology. This group, and HSTC Publications, are now working towards this goal.

The proceedings of the conference will be published in 1979 under the editorial direction of the editors of the BULLETIN and the organizing committee of the conference. At a later date, it is hoped that a comprehensive bibliography of the field can be published.

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QUERY

Mary Cullen, an architectural analyst with the Canadian Inventory of Historic Buildings, is studying stone building methods in the British North American colonies from 1760 to 1867. She would like to receive from readers any references to pre-confederation building contracts and specifications, builder's guides, patents, journal accounts of building or other relevant sources. She can be contacted at:

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