

**MINUTES OF THE FIFTEENTH MEETING
OF THE
CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY PENSIONERS' ASSOCIATION
HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1994
IN ROOM H 767, THE FACULTY CLUB LOUNGE
IN THE HALL BUILDING**

15.1 Call to Order

15.1.1 The President called the meeting to order. He welcomed two members attending

the meeting from out-of-town, namely Joan Flynn and Peg MacMurray. He also greeted any new members who are attending for the first time. He mentioned that we have acquired nine new members since our Spring meeting (May 4, 1994). They are Ruth Richer, Leah Sherman, Cedric Marsh, Ivan Fuchs, Mary O'Toole, Elizabeth Horwood, Lorna Flanagan, Frank Papineau and M.N.S. Swamy. He also announced the unfortunate passing of Lila Van Toch who died on June 19, 1994.

15.2 Approval of the Agenda

15.2.1 A motion to approve the agenda as circulated was proposed by Libby Gardham and seconded by Mona Osborne. The motion was carried. The President mentioned that unfortunately, Dr. Woodsworth, the scheduled speaker, could not attend, due to ill health. However Mme. Amapola Alarez, the Coordinator of the Information Committee of the Coalition, would speak in his stead.

15.3 Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of May 4, 1994

15.3.1 A motion to approve the minutes of the Annual Meeting Held on May 4, 1994 was proposed by Marjorie Boutillier and seconded by Peg MacMurray. Carried unanimously.

15.4 Business Arising from the Minutes

The President informed the meeting that all items under Business Arising from the Minutes would be dealt with under Reports.

15.5 **Reports**

15.5.4 Report from the Coalition
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Due to the fact that the representative had to leave early to catch a report would be given first. Geoffrey Adams prefaced his comments by stating that, upon attending his first meeting of the Coalition, he was impressed by the

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vitality and size of the group, there being over 22 associations represented at the table. He also found the variety of topics very stimulating. The Coalition is a potentially powerful lobby group and is led by two effective co-chairs, David Woodsworth and Giselle Berubé-Farmer. Geoffrey Adams mentioned that Dr. Woodsworth issued a position paper last June outlining the three major thrusts of the Coalition's reading of the concerns of the seniors it represents. They were: health, housing and income.

The Coalition also forms lobby groups to alert government agencies to these and other concerns of seniors. He mentioned that a group from the Coalition met with the three principal political leaders (Johnson, Parizeau and Dumont) just before the last provincial election to apprise them of these concerns .

Other recent Coalition activities were:

- A Coalition presence at a conference (Sept. 8, 9, 10) on healthy aging and relief for burn-out of caregivers.
- Consistent and close monitoring of, and preparation of briefs about the Axworthy Report.
- Contributions of information to and participation in a seniors newsletter "une voix - one voice" issued by the Canadian Seniors Network.

He also stated that Mme. Alarez is actively working on information research for the elderly (eg. an information data bank of all types of information concerning people in our age group). He advised the group that Mme. Alarez is looking for volunteers to provide guidance to others as to how to use the data bank. Since we are the only university association within the Coalition it would be beneficial if others from the Quebec academic community could join to increase Coalition access to individuals with training in certain disciplines and who might well furnish information which will become increasingly vital in the years ahead.

15.5.1 Report from the Representative on the Pension and Benefits

15.5.1.1 Committees Health Insurance Plan.

Muriel Armstrong advised the group that the Health insurance Plan has reported a significant surplus in income over expenses. The major reason is that some costly services have had a marked under-utilization. Such services as out-of-country and nursing-care claims have not been used to the extent predicted. However in-Canada and prescription costs are well used and costs are rising. She predicted that once the rates are set for the new contract year we

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rate reduction. On the other hand there is a proposal to consider some improvements to the plan. Such benefits as:

- increasing funding for vaccine use
- including the use of Athletic Therapists
- additional coverage for para medical (eg. family counsellors, substance abuse counsellors, etc.)
- increased coverage for podiatrists, chiropractors, etc.

She mentioned that CUFA had suggested another area of coverage to investigate as an alternative to rate decrease might be out-of-country emergency services, such as toll-free phone contacts to assist in medical, legal, lost baggage or documents or similar emergencies while one is in a foreign country.

She requested that the membership provide feedback on these issues so that she can report the members' wishes to the Committee.

15.5.1.2 Dental and Vision Care

Muriel reported that there has been no change in the University's position on providing this coverage for the retirees. However she stated that since her last report she has now had firmer estimates of the cost and they would be lower than she first thought. They would be about \$650 per annum for a couple and about 1/2 that for single coverage.

15.5.1.3 Letter from George Snowball

Muriel stated that, as the Pensioner's Representative on the Pension Committee, she had received a letter from George Snowball concerning indexation of pensions. At present the Concordia Pension Committee provides for indexation of pensions on an ex-gratia basis every two years. The increases are based on the increase in the CPI less 2%.

George Snowball is advocating that the increase be based upon the indexing formula of the Quebec Pension Plan. According to his calculations he states that since he retired in 1986 the University's plan has been indexed by 13.9% while the QPP has been indexed by 36.5%. He would like us to urge the Committee to bring the University Plan in line with the QPP indexation and thereafter to contractually index the plan at the QPP level or at the rate of the CPI whichever is the better. She explained that this proposal is somewhat simplistic since one cannot compare the two plans. The QPP indexation is based on the increase in the average industrial wage published by StatsCan and is indexed to a maximum annual income of (for this year) \$34,400. The question of the contractual indexation of the University plan is on the agenda of the Committee and has been for some time but is not being dealt with. She asked the

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membership if this issue should be raised by the Association at the Annual Meeting of the Pension Plan to be held later in the day.

As a result of the ensuing discussion and question period it was decided that the question of reviewing the indexation formula by the Committee would be raised at the Annual Meeting of the Pension Committee. With respect to the Health Insurance Plan it was felt that, in view of the lack of a firm proposal, an improvement in benefits along the lines discussed was preferable to a significant reduction in premiums and since Muriel Armstrong was now aware of the membership's views she would be well placed to act on our behalf.

15.5.2
Committee

Report of the Programmes

Doreen Bates advised the group of the upcoming events for the fall term. They are:

Pointe-à-Callière - November 8th. Cost \$4.50 for a group of 15 or more otherwise it is \$5.00. Members are asked to meet for a light lunch at the café at 12:00 noon or the ticket counter at 1:00 p.m.

Annual Christmas Luncheon -

December 15th. Out-to-Lunch Club -

Will resume in January.

Members were encouraged to participate in any or all of these events and to provide suggestions to the Committee for future events.

3.5.3

Secretary-Treasurer's

15.5.3.1

Report Financial Report

The Treasurer provided a statement of expenses and income for the year June 1, 1993 to May 31, 1994 which is attached to these minutes. A brief update of expenses and income for the period of June 1, 1994 to September 31, 1994 was also given. The Treasurer also updated the membership on the status of the delinquent accounts which was discussed at the May 4, 1994 meeting. There were 30 letters sent out requesting delinquent members to select one of the three following options:

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- a) to pay the dues, or
- b) that, if paying the dues represented a financial hardship, to indicate this and the dues would be covered by a benefactor, or
- c) to indicate that they *are* no longer interested in remaining a member and to strike their name from the membership list.

Of the nineteen replies received, five decided to resign, 2 indicated a financial hardship and were retained and their fees covered by the benefactor's fund and 12 paid their dues. The executive Committee decided to give the eleven remaining members one more reminder which was done with the mailing for this meeting.

15.5.3.2

Secretary's Report

The Secretary advised the meeting that the Association had welcomed 9 new members into the group since the May 4th meeting and had lost one member through death as well as the five members mentioned above who had resigned. The membership stood at 234 including the eleven delinquent members who had yet to be heard from.

15.5.5

Chair's Report

15.5.5.1

Word of Thanks

The President reminded the membership that one of the prime objectives of the Association is to maintain links amongst the membership. He felt the Programmes Committee headed by Doreen Bates was one of the major efforts in helping members keep in touch.

He also thanked Muriel Armstrong, the representative of the members and her alternative representative, Larry Bessner, for voicing our concerns about pensions and benefits to the Pension and Benefits Committees.

15.5.5.2 Constitutional Changes

The President advised the membership that prior to the next General Meeting, members will be advised that certain changes to the constitution will be presented for approval at that meeting. These issues involve the size of the quorum (from 20% to a fixed number or smaller percentage), a new clause dealing with delinquent members (to formalize the situation described in the Secretary-Treasurer's Report) and a change in the size of the Executive Committee (to include "at least" 3 members-at-large).

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15.5.5.3 Retirement Seminar

Participation in the Pre-

The President mentioned that the Association has provided speakers to the University's pre-retirement seminars as part of the fulfilment of our mandate to assist the University. He has been told, informally, that we will again be asked to do so. This provides us with a strong presence among the potential retirees within the University and produces important feedback to us.

15.5.5.4 CUPARUC

The President asked Jim Whitelaw to say a few words about CUPARUC. Jim mentioned that he would appreciate both input for articles and items of interest to readers from and about members, as well as suggestions concerning the format of the newsletter.

15.6 Annual Luncheon

As mentioned in the Programmes Committee report the Annual Luncheon will be held on December 15, 1994 at the Loyola Faculty Club. A mailing will provide details on the menu, costs and parking.

15.7 Guest Speaker - Mime. N. Alarez - Coordinator of New Horizons (Coalition of Quebec Seniors).

Although Dr. David Woodsworth was scheduled to be the guest speaker

at this meeting, he was recovering from surgery and unable to attend. Fortunately Mme. Amapola Alarez, the Coordinator of the Coalition's Data and Information Centre kindly agreed to speak instead.

Mme. Alarez stated that one of the objectives of the Coalition is to represent seniors and to defend their rights at all levels of government. In order to do so effectively it was felt that it needed access to solid data and information when making presentations. Especially information in the area of public policy and the effects thereof. As a result a Data and Information Centre was established in the Fall of 1992. Through a grant from the Federal Government (called "New Horizons") Mme Alarez was hired in February 1993 to develop the project and to train the Coalition members to use the data base.

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The major objectives of the project are to:

- provide Quebec senior organizations with an accessible source of accurate information regarding the nature and consequences for seniors of public policies;
- assist seniors groups to make informed judgments and appropriate recommendations to public authorities and to seniors.

The specific objectives are to:

- develop a documentation centre concerning seniors issues;
- develop relationships with universities and other organizations that carry out research on seniors issues;
- exchange information with such organizations;
- encourage these organizations and researchers to stimulate research in areas of interest to seniors;
- train seniors to run and use the documentation centre and to find the appropriate information when the Coalition or the seniors group have a special need. (This is important since the grant will end in less than a year and the Centre will then have to be run by senior volunteers.)

As the result of a questionnaire developed by Mme. Alarez, it was clear that seniors groups and individuals often do not know where to find relevant information. Also that the main concerns of seniors lay in the areas of health, pensions, income and social services.

To date the project has:

- set up a computerized documentation centre (The Data and Information Centre);

established a basic collection of specialized material referring to social policy; started a "network" of contacts throughout Canada with centres of research and with researchers engaged in specialized research on aging; centralized the data bases in the computer to provide for easy access simply by calling up the "key word", or the title, or the name of the person (whose research you are seeking); provided access to "Internet" and commercial data bases (such as "H Line", a data base concerning seniors issues), as well as access to the local universities library catalogues;
trained 23 seniors to use all aspects of the documentation centre (i.e. to organize, enter, access, index and retrieve the information);

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In addition, five committees have been set up to carry out work in the following areas:

- indexing and key-words (to index and choose appropriate key-words to facilitate access);
- data entry and up-dating the data bases;
- identifying and clarifying government policy issues affecting seniors, advising the Coalition on priorities and assisting in the writing of position papers;
- dissemination of information and materials;
- gathering of data, finding new materials and coordination of research.

Progress has been very good in the first three areas. The data base consists of over 400 documents and over 190 information sources. The research task is the most difficult because it a very complex task. Some of the seniors have been trained in the research task. The training includes such skills as:

- how to define a question;
- what are the main sources of information;
- how to select key-words; how to use the computer;
- learning the methodology of indexing material.

In spite of the training there is still a lack of volunteers with the skill in research techniques, i.e. the type of skills used by faculty and staff in a university setting such as ours. The Coalition has many projects requiring volunteers and interested persons may call Madame Alarez at 343-3524. The number of hours involved depend upon the individual's availability.

Mme. Alarez also stressed that the documentation centre is available to CUPA and any other seniors group who need access to the type of information contained therein. She mentioned that the grant will be ending soon and new sources of funding will be required to help pay the rent and for providing some professional guidance to the project. Any suggestions on funding would be welcome by the Coalition. She also mentioned that the Coalition publishes a publications list a few times a year which is

Note : The President reminded the members that the Annual General Meeting of the Pension Plan was scheduled for later (5:30 p.m.) in the day. This meeting is required by law and provides all members with information about the Plan's administration and status. He encouraged members to attend.

John L. Hall
Secretary-
Treasurer