

An Examination of the Academic Base For Our Association

BY PETER BULL, O.I.S.

Author's Note to the Editorial Board

Kindly find enclosed an article entitled "An Examination of the Academic Base for our Association", which I would like to have printed in the Spring 1984 edition of *The Ontario Land Surveyor*. I am aware that my paper is of a political persuasion and is critical of the Council of Management of the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors. I request that this article be printed in its entirety for two good reasons. Firstly, I did not have sufficient opportunity to inform the membership during the Open Forum at our recent Annual Meeting owing to the time constraint imposed. Secondly, I was strongly encouraged to prepare this article for publication by the Sudbury group of Ontario Land Surveyors. Their encouragement was the result of a presentation made before this group using the same quotes and asking the same questions as those that appear in my paper. In my view, *The Ontario Land Surveyor* is an open forum for its membership whether it concerns a technical, a legal, or as in this case, an administrative issue.

MEMBERS OF the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors who were present for the Open Forum at our last Annual Meeting will recall that there was little opportunity for a member to present an issue of concern to himself and to other members. I was given an opportunity to address the membership on the topic of Ryerson Evaluation, albeit within a four minute time constraint. I chose to defer outlining my concerns until such time as a proper presentation could be made. This issue concerns me and it should concern every member who takes an interest in the affairs of our Association. The material which I had hoped to present at the Open Forum was presented instead, as a test case, before a small group of Ontario Land Surveyors in Sudbury on March 6, 1984. These members had no knowledge of the Ryerson Evaluation, the members were concerned about what had recently occurred and what is expected to occur, and these members recommended to me that

I prepare an article for publication in this Quarterly, objectively describing these concerns.

In the Winter, 1984 issue of *The Ontario Land Surveyor*, Mr. Ian Hale, Program Director of Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, presented an article entitled, "Survey Engineering Technology News". The essence of this article is represented by the following quote:

"Recently, there has been a new development with regard to the way in which the Ryerson (Polytechnical Institute) grads are admitted to the Association. In the past the grads have been evaluated on an individual basis by the Board of Examiners, and have received credits in some subject areas, depending on their individual achievements. In a recent letter to President Brian Segal of Ryerson, Bryan Davies announced a decision by the Board which is very significant to us at Ryerson.

"The graduates with a Bachelor of Technology in Survey Engineering in the four year program now automatically receive 14½ credits. An additional 1½ credits will be given to those graduates who achieve a grade of 75% or better in certain specified courses. The current AOLS syllabus contains a total of 20 credits."¹

In the aforementioned letter to Dr. B. Segal, then President Bryan Davies says,

"It is planned that as future changes are implemented in the (Ryerson) program, further accreditation can be considered."²

It is reasonable to conclude that if credits are granted in four additional courses, Ryerson Polytechnical Institute will have in place a program of twenty credits. Such a program will represent a complete and independent alternative to the existing program offered by the Faculty of Survey Science, University of Toronto.

The significance of this recent development is that it is not consistent with the planned development of an academic base for this Association. Associate Professor R. C. Gunn, University of Toronto,

reminded the membership of the philosophy and objectives which support the existing academic base, when he addressed the membership at the 1983 Annual Meeting. Professor Gunn made the following statements at that time:

"In January 1972 the plan for the first phase of development (of a surveying program) was presented to the Association's Council of Management. The plan outlined the programme objectives, philosophy, curriculum and projected enrolments.

"This plan was unanimously endorsed by a resolution passed in January 1972, at a joint meeting of the Association's Council of Management, the Board of Examiners, the Committee on Education, and the Special Committee on Geodetic Sciences. These objectives were reiterated in the plan for the second phase of the programme prepared by the Association's University Liaison Committee in 1978. The objectives are:

- (1) to provide survey education at the university level, which will serve as an academic basis for development and maintenance of a professional body of surveyors in Ontario,
- (2) to provide surveying education at the university level for candidates who expect to practise professional surveying outside Ontario,
- (3) to prepare candidates for graduate study in photogrammetry, and engineering surveys at the University of Toronto, at other universities in Canada, and elsewhere,
- (4) to establish an educational centre of excellence for surveying in Ontario and maintain highest academic standards in support of the surveying profession. A graduate programme and research capability are inherent in this objective, and
- (5) to establish a Department of Surveying at the Erindale Campus."³

The first and second objectives are to provide a survey education at the university level. Is the Ryerson Polytechnical

Institute recognized in Ontario and in Canada as being at the university level? The third objective is to prepare candidates for graduate study at the University of Toronto and at other universities. Does Ryerson have a graduate studies program? If the Institute does not have such a program, can Ryerson graduates do graduate work at the University of Toronto or any other Canadian University? If not, then why not? The fourth objective is to establish an educational centre of excellence for surveying in Ontario. The University of Toronto has an impressive international reputation in the humanities and the sciences. This University has some of the highest academic standards of any Canadian university. What are the admission requirements and in-course standards established by the Ryerson Polytechnical Institute?

In the article prepared by Mr. Ian Hale and published in the Winter, 1984 issue of **The Ontario Land Surveyor**, Mr. Hale says,

"The curriculum covers the broad spectrum of survey topics with a practical, 'hands-on' approach."⁴

Mr. Bryan Davies has the same view of the Ryerson hands-on program philosophy when he made the following statement in the Spring, 1982 issue of **The Ontario Land Surveyor**:

"Ryerson Polytechnical Institute is a school whose survey engineering program prepares students for technical careers in all phases of surveying. . ."⁵

In my view, a survey program having a hands-on and a technical emphasis is not consistent with some of the accreditation criterion as described in the Accreditation Program of the Canadian Council of Land Surveyors. This Accreditation Program was adopted by AOLS Council resolution on January 26, 1984. One of the general criterion established within the CCLS Accreditation Program is as follows:

"In professional life surveyors of the future will face increasingly complex situations involving sociological and political elements in addition to the professional, scientific, technological and economic factors normally associated with surveying work. The development of a social consciousness requires that specific attention be paid to the structuring of the humanities and social science components of the curriculum."

Does an educational institution having a hands-on and a technical emphasis fulfill this criterion? Is a program having technical emphasis broadly enough based to meet the needs of the future?

The final point which I would like to discuss was first introduced by Mr. F. J. S. Pearce, O.L.S., at the Open Forum of the last Annual Meeting. Mr. Pearce raised the question as to whether or not it was in the public's interest to have two educational institutions, namely Ryerson Polytechnical Institute and the University of Toronto, competing for the same product, namely students, and competing for the same staff and material resources required to produce this product. The cost of a student's education is subsidized by the public. Staff and material resources are provided mainly through public funding.

In Professor R. C. Gunn's address to the membership at the 1983 Annual Meeting, Professor Gunn says,

"A surveying program is costly to operate because of the staff requirements to cover the wide field of expertise and to purchase and maintain the expensive equipment. The number of students relative to other university programs is small, resulting in a low income to the university.

"If the Survey Science Program is to continue to rate highly with the university administration, an increase in attention must be paid to research, graduate studies and a production of papers. . ."⁶

To what extent will the presence of a second educational institution reduce the undergraduate student enrollment in the Faculty of Survey Science, University of Toronto? How will the graduate student enrollment be affected? Is the University of Toronto producing enough graduates to meet the present and future needs of this Association or is it necessary to increase the number of graduates by having a second source?

In this paper I have suggested that the granting of automatic and unconditional credits to Ryerson graduates is not consistent with the well-established plan for providing an educational base to this Association. I have suggested that recognizing courses in the Ryerson program is not consistent with the CCLS Accreditation Program, recently adopted by our Association, and to which the Board of Examiners and Council had knowledge at the time that this evaluation was granted. Finally, I have suggested that it may not be economically viable to have two publicly funded institutions competing for the same scarce resources, thereby lowering the quality of education in both institutions.

A task force has been established by Council of the Association in order to study this matter. I would suggest that concerned members of this Association ask our Council for the rationale underlying this recent development and ask for an indication of the direction that this issue will be going in the future.

1. Ian Hale, "Survey Engineering Technology News", **The Ontario Land Surveyor**, Winter 1984, Volume 27, No. 1, p. 31.
2. Letter dated October 27, 1983 and addressed to Dr. B. Segal, President, Ryerson Polytechnical Institute from Bryan T. Davies, O.L.S., President, Association of Ontario Land Surveyors.
3. R. C. Gunn, "Report on the Erindale Program", **1983 Annual Report of the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors**, Volume 2, pp. 154, 155.
4. Ian Hale, "Survey Engineering Technology News", **The Ontario Land Surveyor**, Winter 1984, Volume 27, No. 1, p. 31.
5. Bryan T. Davies, "Ryerson - Fact Not Fiction", **The Ontario Land Surveyor**, Spring 1982, Volume 25, No. 2, p. 6.
6. R. C. Gunn, "Report on the Erindale Program", **1983 Annual Report of the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors**, Volume 2, pp. 156, 158.

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