

The Abbreviated History of CANCOLD

Based on a reprint from the Archives

While many Canadian Dam Association members can recall the history of the Association since the merger of the Canadian Dam Safety Association and CANCOLD in 1998, few active members are aware of the story of how the dam industry became organized in Canada. Time has also faded the memory of the people and the circumstances which brought the industry together. The following article has borrowed extensively from an archival copy of a report produced in 1994 which captured "The Story of CANCOLD" and was prepared with assistance from CDA Past-Presidents Bob Barnes and Tony Bennett.

Our Beginnings

The International Commission on Large Dams (ICOLD) was established by the World Power Conference (WPC) in 1928 as a special branch of the organization to deal with dams. The first International Congress of ICOLD was held at Stockholm in 1933, and the second at Washington, D.C. in 1936. During this time, Canada, although a member of the WPC, took no action either to set up a Canadian National Committee for ICOLD, or to become a member. No doubt, interest in such international organizations ebbed to a low level during the Great Depression of 1929, and it remained there as the world moved toward the outbreak of World War II in 1939 – at which time the activities of most international technical organizations were suspended.

With the end of the War in 1945 there was a revival of the spirit of international collaboration. The

World Power Conference and its associated International Commission on Large Dams were re-activated, and a Third International Congress on Large Dams was scheduled. The issue of Canadian participation was raised at the August 6, 1947 meeting of the World Power Conference with somewhat negative results, as described in the following extract from the minutes of the meeting.

"It was explained that the Canadian Committee of the World Power Conference had never officially adhered to the International Commission on Large Dams but informal contact had been maintained by the late Dr. Lefebvre and Dr. Hogg" ... as such it was agreed to carry on as before by informal contacts.

In 1952 the subject of Canadian membership in ICOLD was again raised. Dr. R.L. Hearn of the Hydroelectric Power Commission of Ontario (HEPC, later to become OPG) spoke in favour of Canadian membership, and the Canadian Office of the WPC agreed in principle that Canada should join ICOLD, and that the necessary organization should be worked out. Dr. Hearn undertook to arrange payment of the first year's dues, and to solicit interest from other Canadian engineers and their companies in support of the new membership.

At the time, some members of the Canadian chapter of the WPC expressed reservations concerning the increasing number of international technical organizations competing for national participation. As a result though Canada became a member of ICOLD in 1952, no Canadian National Committee was



Dr. R. L. Hearn

formed. Instead, Dr. Hearn acted as Canada's representative, and was assisted by Mr. J.N. McCumber of the HEPC as Secretary. A cooperative arrangement was also made with the Canadian Electrical Association (CEA) whereby the General Manager of that body, Mr. B.C. Fairchild, would administer a fund established to meet the special needs of Canada for its membership in ICOLD activities. During this period, no account of the history of CANCOLD would be complete without appreciative reference to Mr. T.M. Patterson of Ottawa, who, along with Dr. Hearn, helped sustain interest in the movement.

With the approach of the Sixth ICOLD congress in New York in September 1958, the American National Committee of ICOLD (USCOLD) asked for the name of the head of the Canadian delegation. Dr. Hearn was consulted, and he recommended Mr. R.F. Legget, the Director of the division of

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Building Research of the National Research Council of Canada. There was no official accompanying delegation, although a total of nineteen Canadians attended the Sixth Congress. Moreover there were no Canadian papers, and no Canadian participation in the discussion at the technical sessions. This lack of organized Canadian participation caused some concern and embarrassment among Canadians in attendance.

A report prepared on the Sixth Congress, by Mr. J.K. Sexton and Mr. R.F. Legget who were in attendance subsequently made the following recommendations:

1. "Separation is required of the Canadian National Committee of ICOLD from the Canadian National Committee of the World Power Conference, with retention of close collaboration".
2. "Dr. Hearn is to select a Vice Chairman from an organization willing to sponsor the routine activities of the Canadian Committee."
3. "Distribution of this report to individuals and organizations in Canada known to be interested in ICOLD with a view of eventual reorganization of the Canadian Committee."
4. "Exploration of closer association with the Engineering Institute of Canada (EIC) to provide continuity of effort for the Canadian National Committee."
5. "Preparation of a register of dams in Canada."
6. "Promotion of papers for the Seventh Congress of ICOLD in Rome in 1961."
7. "Arrangements for Canadian representation at the annual meetings of the ICOLD Executive Committee, as well as at the Congresses of ICOLD held every third year"

Minutes of a meeting held to consider the report's recommendations quoted; "Mr. Cass-Beggs (Vice-President of CEA) had indicated that the office of the Canadian Electrical

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Association would be prepared to offer facilities for the routine secretarial work of the Canadian Committee on ICOLD on a mutually satisfactory basis."

It was moved by Dr. Gaherty and SECONDED by Mr. Manby that:

"Dr. Hearn be authorized to undertake responsibility for the reconstitution of the Canadian Committee of ICOLD, taking into account the recommendations in the report by Mr. Sexton and Mr. Legget; and that the offer of the Canadian Electrical Association to provide facilities for the routine operation of the Canadian Committee of ICOLD be accepted; and that, following reconstitution of the Committee, funds presently on deposit in the bank account maintained by the Canadian Electrical Association for the joint purposes of ICOLD and WPC be transferred to the account of the reconstituted ICOLD committee."

The motion was "CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY"

The Formative Years of CNC/ICOLD; 1960 to 1967

Following the October 22, 1959 meeting, Dr. Hearn selected Mr. Jack K. Sexton to be his Vice-Chairman, and gave him the responsibility for organizing Canadian ICOLD activities with the assistance of Messrs. R.F. Legget and B.C. Fairchild. A start was made on a Register of Dams for Canada, and arrangements were made for Canadian participation in the 1960 ICOLD Executive Committee Meeting in Tokyo. Messrs. W.E. Hickey, A.F. Paget and C.F. Ripley subsequently represented Canada at the latter meeting.

In developing a set of by-laws for the Canadian National Committee, an effort was made to adapt the new organization to conditions in Canada, with the following amongst the criteria considered:

- An enormous land area with a relatively small and widespread population.
- Activities pertaining to dams limited to a few major power and resource organizations.
- No national organizations with strengths comparable to those lending support to USCOLD in the United States, e.g. the United States Bureau of Reclamation, the United States Army Corps of Engineers, and the American Association of Civil Engineers (with its location in the United Engineering Center in New York).

At the same time the new organization would have to be independent of continuing government support and responsible for paying its annual dues to ICOLD and meeting its out-of-pocket operating expenses. On the other hand, it was recognized that CNC/ICOLD would not be able to afford its own central office (as CEA did); hence, it would have to rely on the assistance, or sponsorship, of a stronger organization, either public or private, for its central office and secretarial services. Fortunately for CNC/ICOLD such assistance was forthcoming initially from CEA through the offices of Mr. Fairchild.

These considerations led to adoption of a set of bylaws with three classes of CNC/ICOLD membership: Collective, Individual and Institutional (Honorary Members were to follow later). They also led to the adoption of two Vice-Chairmen, one for the East and one for the West, plus five regional Executive Committee Members, one for each of the following regions:

1. British Columbia
2. Prairie Provinces (Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba).
3. Ontario

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4. Quebec
5. Maritime Provinces (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador).

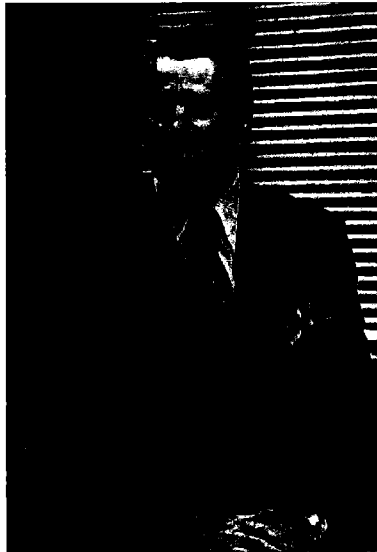
The by-laws also established an initial Executive of three officers to guide the new organization through its formative period with the following taking first office: R.L. Hearn – Chairman, J.K. Sexton – Vice Chairman and B.C. Fairchild – Secretary-Treasurer.

After the proposed by-laws had been approved by Dr. Hearn, Mr. Fairchild sent copies to prospective Collective Members across Canada, accompanied by application forms for membership in the new organization. The response was excellent. Thirty-seven (37) applications were received from the organizations that were to become the founding members of CNC/ICOLD. Their names and those of their representatives are listed in the accompanying table.

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The first undertaking of the newly formed CNC/ICOLD was on the outstanding question of a Canadian Register of Dams. It was explained that ICOLD, in conjunction with UNESCO, intended to publish a World Register of Dams in 1962, and had asked all National Committees to contribute the information on their own dams. D.R. Nancarrow assumed responsibility for completing the Canadian Register and is largely credited with assembling its production. One thousand copies of the first Register were published, complete with gilt-embossed, hard-covers in March of 1965. It was reported that 287 dams complying with ICOLD's definition of Large Dams had been built in Canada.

The first International Congress on Large Dams after the creation of CNC/ICOLD on December 16, 1960, was the Seventh, which was held in Rome in 1961. At this Congress, the



Mr. George E. Gathercole

results of a more vigorous participation by Canada were evident:

- F.L. Lawton and M.D. Lester presented a paper entitled *"The Rock Plug Blast at Chute-des-Passes"*, and M. C.F. Ripley submitted a communication.
- F.L. Lawton, acted as General Reporter for the technical sessions on Question 25, i.e. *"Underground work in connection with Large Dams"*.
- J.K. Sexton was elected Vice-President of ICOLD, representing the Americas.

At the annual general meeting of CNC/ICOLD in 1961, following the Seventh Congress, the combined membership had risen to 71. The Secretary-Treasurer's report showed a cash balance of \$2,237.00, a considerable improvement during the year since the inaugural meeting.

The Edinburgh Congress of 1964 fortunately coincided with the retirement of B.C. Fairchild as the General Manager of CEA and the first Secretary-Treasurer of CNC/ICOLD. The two organizations decided to send "Bev" to the Congress as a joint representative, in part to express a measure of appreciation for the dedicated service that CNC/ICOLD had received during its formative years. This was reported in the typewritten bulletin CNC/ICOLD had issued to keep its

membership informed, usually two issues per year. These early issues were replaced in October 1966 with the first issue of what became known as the CANCELLED Bulletin (The new name "CANCELLED" was adopted in October 1967).

By 1965 ICOLD, recognizing the significant Canadian contribution, awarded the tenth ICOLD Congress in 1970 to CANCELLED to host in Montreal. CNC/ICOLD realized that significant support from Canadian corporate organizations would be required to ensure success of the Congress. Hydro-Quebec generously undertook the major responsibility; when Mr. J.C. Lessard, then the President of Hydro-Quebec, accepted the Chairmanship of the Congress Organizing Committee; Messrs. H.L. McEvoy and E.W. Aumand, also of Hydro-Quebec, became the General Manager and Treasurer respectively. CNC/ICOLD also was supported with the election of Mr. George E. Gathercole, Chairman of Ontario Hydro, and Mr. Hugh L. Keenleyside, Co-Chairman of BC Hydro, became Vice-Chairmen.

The Tenth Congress was held in Montreal in June 1970 and was eminently successful. It occurred at a time when a number of impressive hydro-electric developments had just been completed or were under construction in both the east and the west, particularly the great Churchill Falls project in Labrador and the St. Lawrence North Shore hydro projects in Quebec, and the Columbia and Peace River projects in British Columbia. It would be another 33 years before Canada would play host to the ICOLD Congress, again with the significant support of Hydro Quebec and the Canadian Dam Association.

For many years CANCELLED remained the only national organization representing the dam industry in Canada. And while there were many organizations and many people who played a pivotal and influential role in its success, no history of

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Founding Members of CNC/ICOLD-1960

J.B. Bourne	Atlas Construction Co.	R.F. Leggett	National Research Council
J.M. Breen	Canada Cement Co.	R. Latreille	Hydro-Quebec
D.C. Cannon	Perini Quebec Inc.	F.L. Lawton	Aluminium Laboratories Ltd.
Leonard Cartier	Cartier, Cote et Piette	D.H. MacDonald	H.C. Acres & Co.
D.N. Cass-Beggs	Saskatchewan Power Corp.	G.L. MacKenzie	Prairie Farm Rehabilitation
G.E. Crippen	Crippen Wright Engineering Ltd.	G.D. Mader	N.S. Power Commission
C.A. Dagenais	Surveyer, Nenniger et Chenevert	W.H. Manahan	Brown & Root Ltd.
C.E. Elliott	Morrison-Knudsen Co. of Canada Ltd.	L.J. McGowan	Foundation Co. of Canada Ltd.
		R.C. McMordie	B.C. Power Commission
G.A. Gaherty	Montreal Engineering Co. Ltd.	H. McNamara	McNamara Construction Ltd.
R. Goodman	Mannix Co. Ltd.	A.F. Paget	Province of British Columbia, Water Rights Branch
H.F. Gautrin	Janin Construction Ltee	E.M. Proctor	Proctor & Redfern
R.M. Hardy	R.M. Hardy & Associates Ltd.	H.L. Purdy	B.C. Electric Co. Ltd.
R.E. Heartz	Shawinigan Engineering Co.	J.R. Rettie	Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board
T.J. Hobson	British Nfld. Corp.	W.L. Rice	Province of Ontario, Dept. of Public Work
T. Ingledow	International Power & Engineering Consultants Ltd.	C.F. Ripley	Ripley & Associates Engineering Consultants Ltd.
O.E. Johnston	HEPC of Ontario	C.A. Stollery	Poole Construction Co. Ltd.
J.S. Kendrick	Sandwell International Ltd.	R.E. Tweeddale	N.B. Power Commission
C.G. Kingsmill	Angus Robertson Ltd.		
A.A. Lambert	West Kootenay Power & Light Co.		

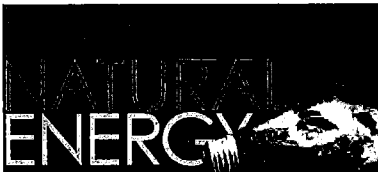
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CANCOLD could be written which did not acknowledge Ernie Aumand who served as Secretary-Treasurer from 1974 to 1991. Ernie's commitment to the organization provided the continuity and connections with the ICOLD offices in Paris, France and served to build Canada's reputation as international leaders in the field.

Our Merger – CDSA and CANCOLD form the Canadian Dam Association

By 1996 serious talks had begun between CANCOLD and the Canadian Dam Safety Association (CDSA) on the benefits of a partnership. The CDSA had formed in 1989 under the leadership of Inge Anderson from Alberta Environment to provide greater representation to



all classes of dams ranging from the low head weirs through to the large structures traditionally associated with the hydropower industry. The Executives of the two organizations recognized the value in providing one forum, agreeing to solidify the dam industry with their merger into a single dam association representing interests in Canada – The Canadian Dam Association (CDA) in 1998. ■



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