

FEDERAL SUPERANNUATES NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

EXECUTIVE MEETING - COMOX LEGION HALL

November 9, 1999

1. The meeting was opened by the President, Al Dawber, with a report on the Branch President's meeting he attended in Cornwall from October 30th to November 2nd, 1999. He said the Dental Plan should be in place by next summer; the cost will be split 60/40 between the Government and the retiree.

The National Office will be in a building that has just been purchased, which will give them much more room. Recruitment was discussed as well as the Long Term Care Insurance Plan. He also said that FSNA now has a voting member in the PSHCP, which is presently under study.

FSNA has been invited to (a) nominate an individual to the Public Service Advisory Committee on the Superannuation Act and (b) nominate a member to the Nominating Committee of the Public Sector Pension Investment Board Act. The Treasury Board recognizes that FSNA is the best representative group in Canada. There will be more information in the next issue of On Guard and in our own Newsletter.

2. Attendance:

Allan Dawber	President	Ann Hallam	Vice President
Tom Dandeno	Treasurer	Dorothy Lind	Secretary
Frank Elvins	Director	Ron Collette	Director/Media
Mary Kamaan	Director/Program	Don Middleton	PSHCP
Velda Hoggan	Director	Bryan Lind	Director
Ronald Mitchell	Director/Newsletter	Ian Sibbald	Director/Welfare

3. Committee Reports:

Treasurer: Balance as at October 12, 1999:	\$11784.44
Revenue	115.50
Expenditures	1153.01
Deficit for period	<u>1037.51</u>
Balance to November 9, 1999	\$10746.93

Membership:

To November 8, 1999:

Members	660	Spouses/partners	334	Total	994
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There are 407 members who pay by DDS.

Media: Ron Collette said no posters had been put up yet.

Welfare: Ian had nothing to report.

Programs: It was moved by Dorothy and seconded by Velda that Tom give Mary a check for \$500.00 to cover the extra cost for the Christmas Meeting. Carried.

The dates for the General Meetings in the year 2000, which have been confirmed, are as follows:

March 15, 2000	June 14, 2000
September 13, 2000	December 6, 2000

Newsletter: Ron said they were preparing for publication and hoped to have the stuffing done around November 20th to 25th for mailing before the General meeting in December.

PSHCP: Don attended a meeting in Victoria; Roger Heath was in attendance. Roger said the

Telephone Committee: Ann has asked the Committee to start phoning members regarding the General meeting by Wednesday, December 1st. She will have to have the reports in by December 5th.

(a) Elections - Mary has declined to run again and Tom has asked that we find someone who would be willing to train and take over from him.

/DML

Branch Presidents' Conference

Summary

By Jean-Guy Soulière

The first ever Branch Presidents' Conference was held at the NAVCAN training facilities in Cornwall Ontario on October 30 to November 2, 1999. All but two branches participated and all members of the National Board of Directors were present.

The conference started with a "Meet and Greet" reception on Saturday afternoon. This was followed by the National President's "environmental scan" that provided the broad context of the issues to be discussed during the conference. He mentioned that the conference was convened because never before has the Association been faced with so many major issues, all of them converging at the same time. He pointed out that the conference in no way replaced the Triennial Convention and that it was not intended to be a decision-making conference.

He touched on the major issues facing the Association:

- pension reform and the implementation of the provisions of Bill C-78;
- the Public service Health Care Plan and the Plan Renewal process;
- the development of the pensioners dental plan;
- the health care system in the country and the involvement of the Coalition of Seniors for Social Equity in this area;
- FSNA's relations with unions and the impact of our strategy on Bill C-78;
- the many threats to our Association, including the emergence of other pensioners' associations and the reduction in our membership base;
- pay equity and our involvement;
- our involvement in the review of the Canada Pension Plan and OAS; and
- our attempt to get the Government to develop a comprehensive policy on aging.

He also reviewed the current economic situation and cautioned that the major focus of government tends to be more towards programs for the young than for the old.

After dinner, participants reconvened to discuss the objectives and expectations of the conference. Participants agreed with the following objectives:

- 1) to ensure a better understanding of the major issues;
- 2) to come to a consensus on the approach in dealing with major issues;
- 3) to ensure continuing input from branches on policy issues.

In addition, the participants listed the following expectations:

- 1) better appreciation of the differences in outlook and approach between branches;
- 2) recognition of the need to have and follow national policies on issues;
- 3) commitment from the branches to support NBOD decisions;
- 4) understanding of how branches can become more involved;
- 5) consensus on approaches to deal with the threats to FSNA; and

6) identification of a process for branch involvement.

During the conference, background information was provided to ensure a common understanding of each issue. Issues were then discussed one by one - either in breakout groups or in general discussions - to arrive at conclusions and consensus.

ISSUE: Pension Reform and Bill C-78

The first issue discussed was pension reform. Two background briefings preceded the discussion, one which provided an overview of the events that led to Bill C-78 and the other that explained the major aspects of Bill C-78 and Bill C-71.

Overview

The history of pension reform really began 8 years ago and was the result of the work done by the PSSA Advisory Committee and the pensioner representative, FSNA's then National President Claude Edwards, who participated in all deliberations of the committee. The Government had made a commitment, in 1992, after the passage of Bill C-55, to bring about changes to the superannuation acts. Advisory Committees for the CFSA and RCMPSA were also established. Allan McLellan, our current Second National Vice-President has been the pensioners' representative on the CFSA Advisory Committee. On January 27, 1995, the PSSA Advisory Committee finally made a report and recommendations to the President of the Treasury Board that included proposals on the distribution of the surplus and the governance of the PSSA. It wasn't until May 31, 1996 that the President of the Treasury Board replied. He stated that he was in general agreement with the direction of the recommendations but couldn't approve them because of concerns about the powers of the proposed joint management board, cost sharing ratios and surplus sharing. He asked the committee to answer specific questions about these matters. The PSSA Advisory Committee submitted a second report on December 10, 1996. It recommended that a special negotiation process to arrive at a new pension deal be established as soon as possible. Finally, on February 27, 1998, the President of the Treasury Board announced that the Government was starting a consultative process with representatives of employees and pensioners (Claude Edwards) directed at the financing and management of the Public Service Pension Plan to ensure its long term sustainability. The negotiations broke down in December 1998 when the offers of the government were not judged to be sufficient by representatives of plan members to give up their claim to the surplus. Since the government was unwilling to discuss surplus sharing, there was mutual agreement that further talks would be useless.

Bill C-71 - Bill C-78

This overview was followed by a brief description of the content of Bill C-71 and C-78. Bill C-71 introduced a reduction formula and changed the pension formula of those who retired on or after June 17, 1999 and, for anyone under age 65 on June 17, 1999 and not in receipt of a CPP disability pension. Bill C-78 increased the benefits under the supplementary death benefit provisions to certain pensioners and details were provided. A description of the advisory committees to be established under each plan was also provided as well as the nomination process for the Public Sector Pension Investment Board. It was pointed out that there would be a pensioner representative on all of the

agreed that we should continue with our relationships with unions in the implementation of pension reform. FSNA, it was felt, did a good job in this area over the years, and should blow its own horn. Branches want to have better input in the strategy for pension reform.

5- *What have we learned from this experience?*

The first lesson is that it is very difficult to achieve major successes when the window of opportunity is too small. It was also felt that this was a very complex issue and that the knowledge and understanding at the branch level in many branches was limited. It is important to co-ordinate efforts with other organizations. The experience did give visibility to FSNA. Also, if time permits, branches should be consulted on the strategy.

ISSUE: Public Service Health Care Plan (PSHCP)

The PSHCP is as employer plan under the National Joint Council that must be self-sufficient. A Board of Management consisting of an equal representation from the employer and employees and an independent chairperson manages it. FSNA sits as a "participating observer" on the Board (no voting voice). Pensioners represent 48.2% of the total plan membership of 462,700. Employees represented by unions total 223,000 members (33.3%) and non-represented members (non-represented members, dependants of the Canadian Forces and the RCMP) total 85,700 members (18.5%). The plan had a healthy surplus until the mid 90s. In 1992, a number of improvements were made to the plan and it was agreed to fund these improvements from this surplus. However, because of a number of factors, including higher costs of drugs and claims, downloading from provinces and the government's decision in 1994 to freeze its contributions, annual deficits started to occur. These annual deficits, even with the increases in premiums in 1997 for pensioners and in deductibles for pensioners and employees, will have eaten up the surplus by early next year and the plan will no longer be self-sufficient, a situation that cannot legally be permitted. Also, for a number of reasons, the Board of Management is only meeting to deal with appeals at this stage. At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the NJC in the spring of 99, there was an agreement between the employer and the unions that a process be established to deal with the matter. The Plan Renewal Process was established and FSNA is representing all pensioner plan members, **with a voting voice**, on this process. The objective is to decide on the governance and financial sustainability of the plan. Two committees have been established, the Consultation Committee which is the decision-making committee, and the Advisory Committee that reports to the Consultation Committee. Rex Guy is the representative on the Consultation Committee, Jean-Guy Soulière, on the Advisory Committee. These committees have met frequently over the past months and have discussed options for the governance of the plan and a funding formula. A memorandum of understanding amongst all of the parties is expected to be approved before the end of the year.

Some of the questions that are being debated at the consultation committee were asked to Branch Presidents:

1- *If we have to make compromises, in what areas do we make them? Higher*

advisory committees and on the Nominating Committee.

The participants then broke out into groups to discuss a number of questions mostly related to the strategy that was used by FSNA in trying to have amendments made to Bill C-78.

The following are the questions and the answers:

1- *How effective was FSNA's strategy in relation to Bill C-78?*

This question was discussed in terms of what it is FSNA was trying to achieve. It was trying to get the government to make changes to Bill C-78 relating to the equitable distribution of the surplus and the establishment of a pension management board.

The government did not move on its position about the surplus but did indicate its intention to move towards a pension management board. Consequently, the strategy was somewhat successful. It was pointed out that this has to be seen in the context that the politicians voted along party lines. Nevertheless, the strategy did permit branches to meet with their local MP's and Senators and FSNA's visibility was enhanced. It was also mentioned that, even with good material, the news media did not pick up our editorials.

2- *Did branches have enough information from the National Office to participate in the strategy?*

The participants felt that the information was sufficient and professional. However, there was very little time to accomplish what was requested. Some branches felt that the matter is very technical and, in meetings with their MPs, felt at a disadvantage. Certain branches indicated that the process of meeting with MP's and Senators worked and that FSNA's visibility was greatly enhanced.

3- *Although very active in the campaign to have amendments made to bill C-78, FSNA was not as visible in the news media as were the unions. Why do you feel that happened?*

Was it necessary to be visible in the news media?

The participants felt that the media prints what it wants to print. Since we're not in a confrontational position, the news media is usually not interested. Also, there was a very limited window of opportunity. It was felt that it would have been better for FSNA to get its name in the news media especially for the benefit of our members who were asking what FSNA was doing during this time. There was discussion on how FSNA could be more successful.

4- *Now that Bill C-78 has passed, what should be our general approach to pension reform?*

The participants feel that we must now explain the good things about pension reform and immediately clear up the matter of the distribution of future surpluses. It will be very important that FSNA be the pensioners' organization that is asked to recommend members to the advisory committees. FSNA must also continue to seek more and enhanced benefits to pensioners. Branches need to be kept informed on all changes or proposed changes to benefits in clear and simple words. The participants also felt that there must be closer ties and co-operation amongst the three pension plans. It was

premiums? Higher deductibles? Lesser benefits?

The Branch Presidents felt very strongly that benefits must not be reduced. All efforts must be made to keep the same benefits without any increases in premiums or deductibles. However, increases in premiums are preferred over increases in deductibles. Cost containment measures, including educating our members, is to be emphasized.

- 2- *Although we have had the support of unions in the past, it is possible that there will be conflict of interests between the needs of employees and the needs of pensioners?*

How do we deal with this?

The participants felt that everything be made to keep good relations with the unions and try to resolve any potential conflicts. However, FSNA must protect the interests of pensioners and vote accordingly.

- 3- *How do we ensure that FSNA remains the representative of pensioners in the governance of this plan.*

The key is to keep being the biggest and strongest and most representative of the pensioners' groups. We must continue our approach to present reasonable and researched positions and communicate with our members.

- 4- *Is FSNA ready to enter into governance of the plan that includes "risk-taking and fiduciary responsibilities?"*

Participants felt that this must be carefully analyzed by the NBOD. If there are to be financial risks to the Association, then we will have to protect the Association.

ISSUE: Threats to FSNA

The major threats to the Association were reviewed. They are:

- the emergence of other pensioners Association that could result in the lost of some of our members or in having these organizations wanting to represent pensioners on advisory committees;
- new pension plans that are not under the superannuation acts such as the NAVCAN plan and the one to be implemented for Canada Post;
- reduction in our pension base resulting from a smaller public service, fewer retirees and the fact that employees can leave the public service and transfer their pensions to other plans;
- the fact that only approximately 1/3 of individuals receiving a superannuation payment are members of FSNA;
- the difficulty of some branches to find volunteers for branch executive positions;
- the lack of participation/interest of our members;
- the difficulty in retaining members who are not under dues deduction at source; and
- the future financial stability of our organization.

Participants then broke out into groups to answer a number of questions on how to deal with these numerous threats.

1- *What strategy can be used to attract 2/3 of pensioners who are not FSNA members? How can branches help?*

It was agreed that the principal reason why individuals don't join is the lack of knowledge about the organization and of its products (objectives). A number of ideas and suggestions were presented to reach these individuals, including advertising our strengths, holding recruitment campaigns in malls, and talking directly to non-members. The first recruitment line is the branch and all branches should organize meetings specifically to attract new members, such as town hall meetings, advertising in other newsletters, linking up with other organizations such as the Legion, organizing more social events, increasing the number of branch executives, and scheduling meetings at different times.

2- *How do we improve our retention rate of members? How can branches help?*

Branch Presidents offered a number of suggestions:

- prove the value of being an FSNA member
- ensure a steady flow of information to branches
- encourage members to be on DDS
- publish effective branch newsletters
- use e-mail to encourage retention
- encourage the use of telephone committees to contact members
- provide assistance to members such as the PSHCP liaison officer program
- contact delinquent members
- send branch newsletters separate from ON GUARD
- organize branch meetings at different places in the branch's boundaries
- hold short and interesting meetings

3- *Is our relationship with unions satisfactory? Should we be closer to unions or should we distance ourselves? What are the implications?*

Branch Presidents feel that our relationship with unions is satisfactory. Even though there have been differences over the years, there has been a lot of information sharing and of mutual support. This relationship must continue and be further cultivated, recognizing that in some situations, there will be a divergence of views. The trust that has been built must be kept.

4- *How do we confront the situation of other pensioners' groups that are emerging? What can branches do?*

We have to realize that these groups are emerging but also that FSNA will continue growing by keeping having success and meeting its objectives. It is important that we emphasize that our membership consists of the three elements of the public service and place more effort in demonstrating our representation of the Canadian Forces and the RCMP. We should be looking at cultivating effective relations with other pensioners' groups and consider expanding our membership to these groups, if they cannot already join FSNA. It was also suggested that FSNA initiate an umbrella group (a coalition) with these other groups.

5- *Should we open up our membership to other pensioners' groups?
What are the implications?*

While some Branch Presidents thought that we should open our membership to other groups, others felt that perhaps we should not but rather utilize our resources to recruit the 2/3 of eligible members who are not part of the Association. Although there evolved a consensus that we should open up our membership, this is to be done with caution and with an understanding of the implications such as providing a service to these other groups and having the required expertise at the National Office. With more members, FSNA would have a stronger voice and more financial support.

6- *How do we get more members involved? What is the role of the branches in this area?*

There was agreement that the key to get more members involved is communications from all levels and in all directions. More training is required at the branch level and at the regional level. Branches that have a telephone committee usually are more apt to have more members' involvement. There was a suggestion that the name of the Association (English) doesn't project who we are and who we represent and that perhaps we should look at a name change. Fixed term for branch executives was an option that was discussed. The organization of special events and providing direct services for members is helping many branches get more people involved. Many branches have branch offices and this means a requirement for more involvement. A survey to members may assist in finding out why there isn't a high degree of involvement. Each branch member should be a recruiter of members. Branches are the key to ensuring more involvement of members.

7- *Is our advocacy approach satisfactory to achieve our objectives?*

How can we improve it? How can branches be more involved with our advocacy role?

Branch Presidents confirmed that our approach to advocacy is the right approach. Although some would like it to be more aggressive at times, there was agreement that it shouldn't be confrontational. We should make a better attempt to have unions understand that we cannot operate the way they do on many issues. We have to find ways to better utilize the news media. Well-researched, factual and objective presentations and documents are the key to the effectiveness of our advocacy role. Branches have an important role to play in terms of our advocacy role by educating our members on the issues and liaising with organizations in their areas that are involved with the same issue. Branches are also responsible to identify sources of support. We have not done a good job of blowing our own horn.

ISSUE: Health Care System in Canada

The only invited keynote speaker to the conference was Barbara Ouellet, Director, Quality Care Group in the Policy and Consultation Branch of Health Canada. During her presentation, she discussed the challenges to the health system and of an aging society. She also elaborated on health expenditures; developments in the health care system in the 1990's; the 1999 budget expenditures on health; the new commitments by governments; and, opportunities for seniors' groups to participate.

Barbara stated that there are four challenges for the health system: concerns about the quality of health care, the impacts of new developments in health science and technology, rising consumer expectations and the demographic factors of an aging population. In the 1990's the health care system was impacted by fiscal controls at the national and provincial levels and drastic cuts to eliminate the fiscal deficits. These leads to the health care system restructuring. Barbara mentioned that even with these dramatic changes and pressures, there is a commitment at the federal and provincial level to sustain Medicare and the 5 principles of the Canada Health Act. This was evident over the past few meetings of Ministers of Health and in the "Social Union Framework Agreement" that was reached. She also mentioned that there is an emerging attention to a "wellness agenda" that includes prevention and quality of life. The Social Union Framework Agreement contains a commitment from the provinces and the territories for public accountability and transparency, achieving and measuring results, establishing mechanisms for citizen participation and for working in partnership. There is also an agreement by the federal/provincial/territorial Health Ministers on priority for joint action. Barbara mentioned that the directions for Health Canada include reinforcing the Medicare principles, strengthening the 1999 "Health Care" Budget and looking into the future of the health care system. She described the distribution of the \$11.5 billions that was included in the 99 budget (transfer payments to provinces and territories over 5 years). She concluded that Health Canada is seeking input from seniors' groups and congratulated FSNA and COSSE as examples of valuable input being provided. There were many questions asked after her presentation.

The participants broke out into group discussions and dealt with the following questions:

1- *What are the main concerns about the health care system?*

There are numerous concerns about the health care system in Canada. The participants felt that the focus must return to putting the patient's needs first and should not be on money. The Federal Government must put more money back into the system. Other concerns included: excessive waiting time to get services; lack of home care services; fragmentation of services; lack of doctors and nurses in rural areas; the creeping costs of hospital and home care services; user fees; drug costs; overworked nurses; a more demanding public; more emphasis should be given to wellness and healthy life-style; dispensing fees are too expensive.

2- *How can branches co-ordinate their efforts in their Region/Province to deal with provincial health care issues?*

FSNA branch/regional representatives should accept the challenge of getting on local and provincial health care boards. There should also be recognition of FSNA in the overall health care system (blowing our own horns). FSNA branches and regions must participate with umbrella organizations at the provincial level (coalitions). Town hall meeting to discuss health care matters should be organized. Branches have a responsibility to raise local health care issues to their regional directors. Working through the political chain of command was seen as a way of contributing.

3- *What is the basic information about health care that is required by older*

2- *Give recent examples of your branch participating in a national policy issue.*

Many branches participated actively in the Bill C-78 campaign and this was a good example of branches getting involved with guidance and assistance from the National Office. It was mentioned that, in some cases, there is a danger of tensions between branches/regions and the National Office on certain policy issues. An example given was the situation in Nova Scotia in relation to Pharmacare. Nevertheless, it is agreed that the national policy is to be endorsed. Many branches get involved in policy issues at the regional level and participate with other organizations on provincial issues.

3- *Do you see the role of the branch continuing to expand? In what areas?*

The role of branches has certainly expanded over the years and this reflects the expanding role of the national organization. The issues have changed. For example, whereas the Association just a few years ago did not get involved with provincial matters, this has become a major role in many regions. Also, as mentioned in question 2, branches do want to get more involved with issues. It was suggested that the structure of the organization should perhaps be reviewed. This expanding role, it was suggested, must be considered with a certain apprehension, however. The expanding role must be within our approved mandate. If it is not, then the mandate must change. It was cautioned that we shouldn't move into new areas without having the necessary resources. "We can't be all things to all people." There was also another danger to the expanding role and this is the difficulty in many branches to find volunteers for their branch executives.

4- *In order for the Association to be successful in its advocacy role, there needs to be consistency throughout the country. How does each branch assure this?*

The key is communication. The National Office must keep branches completely informed. The rationale for the policy, position, or approach must also be explained. Again, use of the electronic system is suggested. On national issues with provincial implications, the national organization must, if possible, provide the boundaries but permit the regions/branches to be able to "regionalize" the issue.

5- *What is expected of the National Office by branches that do get involved in the advocacy group?*

One of the panellists summarized the role of the National Office and this summary appeared to be accepted by the participants: the National Office is the national researcher, the policy director, the orchestra leader(coach), the standard bearer, and the campaign manager.

Briefings by the National Office

A number of briefings were provided by the National Office

ON GUARD/branch inserts

A number of examples of branch inserts were provided as well as an explanation of the editorial and printing process. There was an explanation of the ON GUARD schedule to illustrate that there is very little flexibility in the dates.

Canadians?

Older Canadians need information as individuals, such as their health card number. From a general point of view, information on the Internet should consider the requirements of older Canadians. There is much confusion about the different responsibilities of the three levels of government in the health care system and this should be clarified. Basic information such as what is available, where, and at what cost must be made more readily available to older Canadians. The Survivors' handbook and the PSHCP booklet must be revised. Although participants felt that individuals are responsible for their "wellness", improvements to the information system are required.

- 4- *Should FSNA continue its role to spearhead coalitions of interested groups in health care matters? Should it expand this role? How? What are the implications?*

Although there is general agreement that FSNA should continue its role in this area, the participants felt that health care is mostly a provincial matter and that there is a need to establish provincial coalitions. The groups felt that the timing is right for seniors' intervention in provincial matters, such as health care. Branches also felt that it is important to have expertise in the matter and that they should seek to see if any of their members has expertise in the matter. A few branches/regions gave examples of involvement in provincial health care matters. Guidance and expertise from the National Office is required.

- 5- *To what extent is the National Office expected to assist branches/regions in dealing with provincial health care matters?*

Participants felt that this is difficult since each province is different. They nevertheless expect information and guidance from the National Office especially in instances when a consistent view from across the country is required. Participants also recognize that if the National Office were required to do more then more resources would be required.

ISSUE: The Changing/Expanding Role of a Branch

This was a panel discussion of four Branch Presidents. They were asked to deal with 5 questions and there was, after each question, a general discussion with all participants.

- 1- *To what extent should branches be involved in discussing/recommending national policy issues?*

Although it is essential that branches get involved in discussing and providing their views on national policy issues, it was recognized that sometimes there isn't enough time for the national organization to get comments from the branches through the Regional Directors. Also, many of the issues are very complex, requiring expertise that may or may not be available at the branch level. It was felt that the Bulletin to Branches has been effective in keeping branches abreast of developments on major issues. With more and more branches having E-mail and Internet, it is possible to communicate almost instantaneously with branches. Branches do want to discuss issues and national policies.

Dental Plan

Claude Edwards represents all public service pensioners and Allan McLellan, all CF pensioners on the Pensioners' Dental Plan (PDP) Consultation Committee. The target date for the introduction of this voluntary plan is the summer of 2000. It will be similar to the current dental plan for federal government employees. Contribution rates have not yet been determined. Costs will be shared (60% government-40% pensioner).

Long Term Care Insurance Plan

A package describing the plan was included in the registration package given to each participant. The pilot project in the Ottawa St-Lawrence region appeared to have been successful and a decision to proceed with a gradual phase-in national implementation will be made shortly.

National Office Accommodation/Organization

A picture of the building purchased by FSNA was shown. The purchase will protect FSNA from steep increase in rental costs now occurring in the National Capital Region and will provide stability to the organization. The office is central and easily accessible. There have been no changes in the National Office structure.

Planning the 2001 Triennial Convention

The Convention site in the National Capital region will be chosen in the near future. Branch Presidents were reminded of the formula allocating the number of delegates from each branch. The cost of the convention was raised as a "red flag" since it is expected to cost far more than estimated mostly because of rising costs of accommodation in the National Capital Region.

Recruitment and Retention

A number of charts were discussed with participants showing the growth of the Association from 20,000 members in 1983 to over 100,000 now. It is evident that the "Insert campaign" is the most effective recruitment vehicle. Dues deduction at source is our most effective retention tool. Our membership is aging significantly and the ratio of male members to female members is 70/30. Charts showing the potential membership for each region were shown and it was mentioned that each branch would receive a copy of a similar chart for their branch.

Expanding role of the National Office

It was noted that throughout the discussions, it was evident that there are many expectations on the National Office. It was agreed that new requirements have to be analyzed in terms of financial and human resources implications.

Town Hall Meeting with Members of the Executive Committee

Participants were invited to ask questions or debate issues with the members of the Executive Committee. Many of the issues discussed during the conference were again

raised. The matter of facilitating the process of making resolutions in between conventions was discussed in detail. There was agreement that there is no barrier in the by-laws that hinder the branches from making resolutions. The financial state of the Association was discussed and raised as a "red flag". Although in line with the approved three-year budget, additional expenses, such as the increased costs of the Convention and the downloading of the mailing costs of the **ON GUARD** to the National budget will create stresses on our finances. This will have to be addressed. Clarification on a number of issues was provided during this discussion.

Consensus

After a brief summary of all the issues that had been discussed during the Presidents' conference, the participants agreed that the three objectives of the conference had been met. They also agreed that, by and large, the conference met the 6 expectations agreed to at the outset of the meeting. They also agreed that consensus in a number of areas had been attained during the conference:

- 1- Our advocacy approach is effective and should continue but should always be flexible. We must not move towards confrontational approach.**
This also includes our political advocacy approach. It also means that, when required, FSNA can be aggressive without becoming confrontational.
- 2- Our relationship with unions should continue to be cultivated but not at the expense of giving up our independence.**
Continued efforts to ensure that unions know and understand who we are and what we are will assist us, especially in instances when our approach on an issue is different from theirs.
- 3- We must protect PSHCP as one of our major benefits. Confidence was expressed on the approach being used by National Executive in the Plan Renewal Process.**
- 4- FSNA should open up its membership to other groups/individuals.**
In arriving at this consensus, participants also want to ensure that the implications are carefully reviewed and analyzed before an organization or group of individuals is permitted to join.
- 5- It is recognized that any new initiative must consider the ability (human and financial) of the National Office to deliver.**
- 6- Our research capabilities must be maintained. It is one of our most valuable assets to continue our advocacy role.**
- 7- There is a commitment from branches to keep the National Office informed of developments in their areas.**

- 8- Regional Directors play an essential role in decisions on all FSNA issues.
- 9- There must be more focus on provincial issues with assistance and guidance from the National Office.
- ✓ 10- FSNA must do a better job of showing that it also represents members of the CF and the RCMP.
- 11- Branches are involved in policy issues.
- 12- Efforts to improve communications (all dimensions) must continue.

Conclusion

The National President concluded the conference by announcing that he had just received a letter from the President of the Treasury Board inviting FSNA to nominate an individual for membership to the Public Service Advisory Committee on the Superannuation Act and to nominate a pensioner for membership to the Nominating Committee to be established pursuant to the Public Sector Pension Investment Board Act. He said that this was an excellent example of FSNA's image and influence. He thanked the National Office staff for putting this conference together. He stated that the National Board of Directors had come to listen to the Branch Presidents and this is what they did. He felt that the participants gained an understanding and a better insight into the very complex issues facing FSNA and that they will be in a better position to explain them to the membership. The organization is adjusting to the growing role of branches. It must. He was pleased that consensus was reached on a number of very important issues but, above all, he felt that the participants were very supportive of the approaches and policies of the National Executive. He thanked the participants for their input.