

NEWSLETTER

CANADIAN POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION

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H A V E Y O U D E C I D E D Y E T . . .

whether or not to come to the IXth triannual World Congress of the International Political Science Association being held this summer in Montreal at Sir George Williams University from August 20th to 25th. It is being preceded on August 18th and 19th, also at Sir George Williams, by the Annual Meetings of the Canadian Political scientists to which political scientists of other countries are being cordially invited.

If you have decided to come, but have not as yet registered, please send in your registration form as soon as possible so that the Canadian Organization Committee will be able to make adequate arrangements for the Congress. These cannot be made at the last minute. If you do not have a copy of the preliminary programme and registration forms they can be obtained from the Canadian Political Science Association, 30 Stewart Street, Ottawa, Ontario.

The final programme, including a list of the papers being presented at the principal sessions of the Congress, will be available by the end of May and can also be obtained from the above address.

*All correspondence
relating to the newsletter
should be directed to the editor:*

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The State of the Discipline

We received from Neil Swainson (University of Victoria) a copy of this memo on the state of Canadian political science. It was written in 1950 by R. MacGregor Dawson for the Social Science Research Council and it describes the current state of the teaching of political science in Canada. We decided to publish the memo in the hopes that other members of the C.P.S.A. will find it as interesting as we did. 1950 is not so long ago but there have certainly been changes in political science in Canada. What is the state of political science teaching in Canada now?

Secretary,
Canadian Social Science Research Council,
166 Marlborough Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario

Dear Sir:

Re: Political Science Teaching in Canada.

In accordance with the request of the Council I have during the past eighteen months been in touch with the following thirty-one colleges and universities in Canada and discussed with them the teaching of political science. I was unable to go to Bishop's at Lennoxville (I made two attempts), but I interviewed the President in Nova Scotia. Nor did I see St. Paul's in Winnipeg, although I had a chat with the man who is responsible for the political science there. I visited all the remaining twenty-one institutions.

Newfoundland
Memorial

Nova Scotia
Dalhousie
St. Francis Xavier
Acadia

Prince Edward Island
Prince of Wales
St. Dunstan's

Ontario
Toronto
Queen's
Royal Military College
Western
McMaster
Ottawa
Carleton
St. Patrick's

New Brunswick

New Brunswick
Mount Allison

Quebec

Laval
McGill
Montreal
Sir George Williams
Bishop's

Manitoba

Manitoba
Brandon
St. Paul's
St. John's
United

Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan

Alberta

Alberta

British Columbia

British Columbia
Victoria
Royal Roads

I took as my primary objects the investigation of the teaching of political science in each institution and the presentation of suggestions which might lead to more time and attention being devoted to the subject. I usually mentioned that the Social Science Research Council was somewhat perturbed at the comparative neglect which political science has suffered, and believed that in view of the importance of the subject, particularly under modern conditions, it deserved a much more prominent place on the curriculum than it has heretofore enjoyed. The discussion usually touched on such things as course prescriptions, teaching personnel (quality and number), teaching loads, institutes of public administration, library facilities, and even occasionally salaries. I received in every instance a most cordial reception; and I encountered no reluctance whatever to discuss any of the questions which were even indirectly related to the investigation.

I find it extremely difficult to draw generalizations in such a report as this. I made brief summaries of conditions at most of the institutions I visited, and on reading those over I am most strongly impressed with the wide variety of conditions which were encountered, I have, however, jotted down a few comments which may be of use, although I suspect they are known to most of the Council. My greatest endeavour on my tour was to shake up the presidents and deans a bit and to stimulate them to do something more about the teaching of political science. Whether that was successful or not will not appear here; it must wait on the events of the next few years.

1) There is no doubt that political science is a neglected subject; and this bears singularly little relation to the size of the institution, though it is not entirely divorced from it. British Columbia, for example, has only one full-time man teaching political science (with one other course being offered by the President), yet St. Francis Xavier has one full-time man teaching the subject. The University of British Columbia has roughly ten times the enrolment of St. Francis Xavier; and offers (I am told) 862 courses of which no less than 78 have been added very recently. It is only fair to say that

the University of British Columbia would be the first to plead guilty; though whether an enlargement of staff is possible at a time when enrolment is dropping, is another matter.

There are several colleges on my list which do not teach political science at all, e.g. Victoria (B.C.), St. John's (Manitoba). Carleton College is nominally at the other extreme and heads the list with no less than 22 courses in the calendar, although 13 of them were not given last year. Carleton is, of course, in an unusual position both because of the potential demand for the subject and the college's ability to secure part-time assistance. Last year it had two full-time and five part-time instructors in the field. One gets the impression that the programme is far too ambitious for the resources in both personnel and money; it is the only institution in Canada where too much political science is attempted.

2) There are several instances where the teaching of political science at one institution depends primarily on the policy followed at another.

Royal Roads does not teach the subject because it gives only the first two years of the Royal Military College course, and R.M.C., does not offer it there. The Department at R.M.C. bears the encouraging title of the Department of Political and Economic Science; but their provisional curriculum for the first three years of all their courses contains no mention of political science. Four courses in economics and three in commerce are already on the curriculum, and it is understood that this will be augmented by two political science and two more in economics. The staff is to be composed by two economists (one to get a maximum salary of \$6600) and one in commerce; and political science is probably to be taught under some arrangement with Queen's. For a supposedly broad course to train future officers of the armed forces, the proposed prescription in political science would appear to be fragmentary indeed.

In Manitoba the teaching at the affiliated colleges takes the university prescription as the maximum offering, and it may be substantially less. Inasmuch as the major or entire effort in these colleges is in the first two years and as heretofore the University of Manitoba has not offered political science until the third year, the subject has had little opportunity to develop. In 1950-51, however, politics has been placed in the second year at the University, and this will probably result in Brandon, United and St. Paul's (but not St. John's) offering it in the second year also.

The same situation occurs in British Columbia and Victoria, but there seems to be no immediate prospect that politics will be offered in the second year. This is unfortunate because:

- (a) It is impossible for a student (particularly if the introductory course is an prerequisite for later ones) to take any large number of courses in political science or any of an advanced nature - even if they were to be made available.

- (b) Students elect their honour courses at the end of their second year. A student who might want to elect political science would thus have to make his choice in complete ignorance of the subject in which he expects to specialize. He will in all likelihood take something else.
- (c) The Law School demands the first two years of arts before entrance. A law student who enters with the minimum requirement is therefore unable to secure political science, though the faculty of law are desirous of having the subject taken before the students enter their course. It was pointed out to me that the situation is not entirely to be regretted, in that the student's two years of art might thus be a bit less closely related to his speciality and hence more broadening, or, as an alternative, he might be induced to complete all the work for the arts degree.

3) There is no doubt that there has been a marked stirring of interest in the study of political science within the past two years. Honesty compels me to state that I found tangible signs of this on my arrival at a number of places, so that I can lay claim to no credit for the movement. In most instances I found that I was knocking on a door that was already ajar, and that administrative or financial difficulties were the chief barrier to a programme of expansion. In saying this, I think my informants were sincere. There was, moreover, concrete evidence of growing interest. St. Francis Xavier, for example, had just shifted over to one full-time man in the subject; Acadia was awaiting an opportunity to introduce the subject (which it has done this September); Alberta was beginning to prepare the ground for its expansion a year from now.

4) This "Stirring of interest" has been most marked in two of the French-speaking universities - Laval and Ottawa. Both of these are about to institute Schools of Political Science and to offer much more undergraduate and graduate work than heretofore. In Ottawa, at least, these courses owe much to the Canadian civil service, which is creating a demand for such courses, and to the feeling that a disproportionately small number of French-speaking Canadians are being taken into the service at the higher entrance level. At both universities, however, it would appear that the new course, though still tentative, show signs of being unduly specialized and descriptive, a tendency which is likely to cater to a regrettable predisposition of some of the federal departments in favour of narrow technical information rather than a broad training before admission. If these fears are well-founded, it would seem that the duty of the universities is to educate the departments to take the broadly-trained student and not to train the students to fit in with ill-conceived departmental ideas. The students will eventually get the narrow and short-sighted ideas fast enough without any aid from us.

5) Public administration and municipal government are for the most part neglected subjects, and little has been done, (as at Dalhousie and Queen's) to tie the university teaching in with the work of the provincial or municipal government. I endeavoured to put this idea forward on a number of occasions,

