

# What's Right for t

## *Some Comments on the Restructuring of the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors*

by T. P. JONES, OLS

Right up until last February, I supported restructuring at every opportunity. The basic concept of officially broadening the scope of our responsibilities I believe is a good one. The closer we get to taking the final plunge, however, the more apprehensive I seem to become. I think of that old saying, and the underlying story, "All that glistens is not gold".

Although I have never fully appreciated the advantages of vertical restructuring, my mind is not made up on the matter of horizontal restructuring. For this reason, I support our Association's plans to gather all relevant information to enable us to properly assess the whole matter and to come to the correct decision concerning it.

Following are some comments and questions. Some of the questions can surely be answered by the Committee on Restructuring. I hope that some will be answered by our impending new members, the photogrammetrists, geodesists, and the hydrographers. Some, we can only put to ourselves, to decide privately whether or not some hypothetical problems are real or not. If the foregoing sounds a bit portentous, it is not meant to be.

Our Association is a professional body, but it is not in as strong a professional position as some others. It is one of the smallest self-governing bodies, so it is not in a position of strength when dealing with others.

I believe that when a list of professional organizations was compiled for the exclusion of their members from certain aspects of the Workmen's Compensation Act, the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors was not included on this list. Representation was made by Council to the Government, and the name of our Association was added to the list. So you can see that by some we are not automatically thought of as professionals. By definition, we qualify, but not overwhelmingly so.

The following paragraph or two refer to vertical restructuring.

Because our status among professional bodies does not carry great prestige when compared to some others, I would suggest that we are in no position to lead in a matter that may well end up in a general re-organization of all professional bodies. We all know that the denturists have been generally unsatisfied with their lot. What about the anaesthetists on the fringes of the medical profession? What other groups are just waiting for an opportunity to make a major change?

Any improvident moves on our part could well incur the combined wrath of other professionals, and I am not too

sure that we are strong enough to weather such a storm. Someone may suggest that the definition of our duties be rewritten, and we would no longer enjoy professional recognition, nor its concomitant benefits.

So far as this vertical restructuring is concerned, I submit that we should wait. Let us wait until the dentists have admitted the denturists to their profession, until the doctors have admitted the X-ray technicians, the architects their draftsmen, the lawyers their title searchers, and the engineers their technicians. Then let us take a second look at it, and see what we can do at that time.

With reference to the horizontal restructuring, what is the particular characteristic of our occupation that qualifies us to be classed as professional? A whole lot of our work is of a technical nature, and is therefore quite properly delegated to technicians under our supervision. Our chief claim to fame, if I may put it that way, is our expertise in assessing survey evidence pertaining to boundaries, and our knowledge of what is best for our clients in matters related to those boundaries. We have to make judgment calls all the time.

I am not sure if what follows is entirely relevant, but I would like to put an example before you.

Some years ago a surveyor was asked to carry out a Municipal Survey to establish the limit of a road allowance. He found evidence, made his decision, posted the line, and prepared a plan. At the subsequent hearing, the surveyor's decision was upset, and he was required to repost the limit and prepare a new plan. The surveyor submitted two bills, one for his work up to and including the preparation of the first plan, and the other for the reposting and preparation of the new plan. He was paid twice, and quite rightly so.

What I am trying to get at is this. What claim to professionalism do the geodesists, photogrammetrists and hydrographers have? Under what conditions would they be paid for doing work which subsequently had to be done over again? When do they have to make a judgment call similar to the ones that we make every day?

In other words, are they carrying out duties that can truly be called professional? I will readily admit that some of them are supertechnicians, great mathematicians and scientific geniuses, but are they professionals?

I know of a geodesist who boasts that a least squares adjustment of a survey network will give a unique and correct set of results. I put it to you that this is a scientific achievement, not a professional one. Using modern computer technology, the same can be said of survey network

design.

As a result of this article, perhaps members of these other disciplines may be persuaded to submit, for possible publication in this journal, those arguments which they believe support their claim to recognition as professionals. For our Association will surely need these arguments if and when a revised Surveys Act to govern a "restructured" association is presented to the legislature.

I would like now to consider the implications of a minimum tariff by-law when passed by the photogrammetrists (hereinafter referred to as the "photos"), after they have been admitted to our Association under a restructured Act. They will surely pass a minimum tariff by-law, and I am not at all sure that this would be a bad thing. At least they would be free to do a decent job at a fair price, without worrying about the competition undercutting their bid.

However, our ultimate responsibility is to society, and our primary task to get a revised Act through the legislature.

If and when a minimum tariff by-law is passed by the photos, then their survey costs will increase, and overnight a one-million dollar a year industry is going to turn into a two-million dollar a year industry, but with no corresponding increase in productivity. This is an exaggeration, of course, but are we going to be able to convince the legislature and society that this is indeed in their best interests? I think we are going to have an uphill battle.

A couple of spin-offs from this situation are also rather horrible to contemplate.

Will an Ontario Land Surveyor (photo), or Land Surveyors (photos), be allowed to bid competitively outside the Province and indeed, outside the country? What will happen then to their principle of a minimum tariff by-law?

Will a photogrammetric firm from outside the Province be allowed to bid competitively on a job inside the province? As I understand it, an outside firm will have to acquire a temporary licence from our Association to do work in Ontario. This firm will then presumably have to abide by the O.L.S. minimum tariff. In other words, we are going to charge, say, a B.C. firm \$200.00 for a licence so that it in turn can charge its client 30% more money than the firm has already indicated that it is prepared to do the work for. How long do you think the clients will stand for this? Do we reasonably think that the Ontario legislature will go along with this? If the revised Act should be passed, and this situation arises, where will we be then? If you think that we have troubles now, just you wait! You ain't seen nothin' yet.

I mentioned the foregoing at a recent meeting of the Eastern Regional Group, when members of the Restructuring Committee were present. Their comment

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was that it was an interesting point. I find it rather incredible that after all this time spent on restructuring that these contingencies have not been considered. It makes you wonder what other troubles may be in store, what other tiger is waiting to jump upon us. Extreme caution is advised!

It has been suggested that if restructuring is not proceeded with, the Erindale program will be in jeopardy.

I think that every one of us today would hate to see anything that would threaten that institution, which has been set up after so much hard work by so many. But will it really be in jeopardy?

Sooner or later the graduates of Erindale are going to find their way into positions of responsibility in all survey disciplines, both in the private and government sectors. As reform is brought to the various land registry systems across the country, as cadastres are gradually built up, and retracement principles brought more or less into line,

I think we would see some form of restructuring occurring in a more natural form as time goes by.

As I mentioned at the beginning, I have not yet made up my mind how I am going to vote on this thing. If my doubts can be set to rest, difficult though it may be for you to imagine, I may yet vote in favour of restructuring.

If I do vote against it, however, and the restructuring issue does go forward, then for me to get behind it and give it every encouragement that it is going to need, I want to be sure that I have been good and wrong.

I don't think that a simple majority would satisfy me.

On many important issues concerning our Association, a two-thirds majority of the votes is generally required to pass the motion, by-law or whatever. I cannot imagine anything more important than this restructuring issue so far as our Association is concerned.

Therefore, I call upon Council to

decree that a simple majority of the membership be necessary at the voting to be held at the Annual Meeting in Sudbury on February 3, 1975, to enable the studies to continue, but that a two-thirds majority be necessary at the ballot on or about August 1, 1975, before the White Paper is presented to the Minister for legislative action.

I am not sure what form the questions will take upon which we are to be asked to vote next August, but I would like to see a rider inserted to the effect that if the question is defeated, then no more discussion be permitted on this matter by any official group of members of this Association, and without limiting the generality of the foregoing, to include Council at any of its meetings, by any Regional Group of the Association, or by the Association itself at any of its special or annual meetings, until another provincial Land Surveyors Association has successfully restructured, or until after the Annual Meeting of this Association in 1985, whichever occurs sooner.