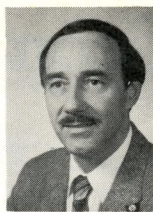


# PROFESSIONALISM — PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY — STANDARDS

BY WAYNE BRUBACHER



**P**OLICY IS stated by Council. It may originate from a committee as a recommendation and if it falls within the gambit of by-laws, receive approval by the membership.

It is the policy of Council that if a letter is sent to the Editor of the Quarterly for publication, which appears to state policy or refute it, or is in any other manner contraversial, a rebuttal is published in the same issue so that the reader is at once apprised of the Association's viewpoint

◀ the other surveyors think. The few I spoke to so far are not very happy. I therefore propose, that the draft in its present form will be discussed at the next series of Regional meetings. I love to hear the views of my colleagues. Regularly we are urged to talk more to each other, discuss matters of common interest and thereby improve the affairs of the Association as a whole. This is a unique chance.

At the Annual Meeting we did not have a proper chance to speak out. The time was not there. Also written questions do not give us an idea what other surveyors think.

I propose the following:

1. Scrap the proposed standards for field-notes and guidelines for construction and similar surveys.
2. If Council is not prepared to do so, they should be discussed at Regional meetings.
3. All of us have a good look at our operation and improve wherever we can.
4. Improve, wherever possible the educational and training system of Erindale College and articulated students.
5. Vow, that when we take on an articulated student we will do everything in our power to make such a student a real professional for the sake of himself, ourselves, the association and the public we serve.

If we want to stand on our own feet, let's not forget that we can only do so by accepting the responsibilities that go with it. The one cannot survive without the other. ●

together with the author's.

The letter in this issue contributed by Martin Vorsteveld is, in my opinion, one such letter which requires rebuttal.

Martin was the Chairman of the Standards Committee for the two years prior to my appointment. The "Blue Paper" on Standards for Surveys included all of the regulations which were finally embodied in the Standards for Surveys approved by a significant majority vote and became effective February 1, 1983. He attended most Regional Group meetings to explain the document and convince the membership of the need for Standards. Unfortunately, the discussions always bogged down on Standards for field notes. It was a surprise to many that one of the planks in his campaign platform was an attack against STANDARDS. When the Attorney General introduced Bill 123, the Engineers Act, to the legislative last fall, he commented that the only justification for the continuation of self-governing bodies, was that the public interest could be served and protected.

The report of the Professional Organizations Committee has become the basis for all new legislation relating to self-governing bodies, and it is apparent in the Architects and Engineers Act as well as the proposed Surveyors Act, 1984.

Our proposed Act confirms what the present Surveyors Act, RSO 1980 c 492 states as the objects of the Association and it instructs with respect to the Code of Ethics containing Standards. Discipline is clearly designated as the responsibility of the Association and presently two lay appointees sit on our Council as provided for by the Statute to ensure that the public is protected.

Chartered Accountants are governed, in addition to their Statute, by procedural handbooks which are very specific in their application. Are they less than professional because of this?

Our membership is not a homogenous group. Our educational backgrounds vary considerably because of upgrading of entrance requirements over the years. Notwithstanding education, attitudes are extremely diverse. On either side of the norm, lie those who have always considered themselves as professionals and

those who still are tradesmen in their behaviour and thought.

In Martin's first paragraph he refers to "a very small segment that is just no good". Even if he means 5%, we have 35 bad surveyors, or one in 20, however, I don't know where he gets his statistics.

The tradesmen I referred to above are not the type referred to as "just no good". They are those who put "self" ahead of professionalism and the public good, those who cut the service and quality to compete for the job, those who charge nothing besides wages because they place no value on the service they should be offering. These are not such a small segment. This group is large enough to adversely affect pricing so that the whole surveying community is bound to the unworkable low range of the most unscrupulous member.

Without Standards, all surveyors are dragged into that group who must cut the service and quality to fit the price, thus offending the only justifiable reason for being self-regulating.

The conscientious surveyor, who respects his obligation to serve the public well, and is endeared to his professional vocation and jealous of his right to self-regulation, will no longer abide competing on unequal ground. As long as some of our members continue to threaten the Association's existence by their unprofessional behaviour, Standards will be required for the well-being of the profession and the good of the public. I have not addressed the letter point by point. It contains many statements which are uncorroborated but implied to be true and these unproven statements form the basis of further conclusions. The careful reader will pick these out as the writer's opinion.

I will address only two points. It is a sorry assessment of our profession that some jobs as apparently simple as staking out houses require guidelines, but our insurance claims indicate they do. It is equally unfortunate that the Standards Committee had reason enough to recommend to Council that guidelines for field notes should be made Standards. Lastly, I must draw attention to the old fashioned thinking that still occurs and is demonstrated by the statement, "The less we publish, the safer we are from such attacks." Obviously many surveyors held that opinion and it was evident from their plans which showed almost nothing. Today we realize our responsibility to define and describe the extent of title to property, that it is properly demarcated and the conditions reported to our clients, the public.