



The English-Speaking Union of Canada

1882 South Haven Place
Ottawa ON K1H 5B2

President's Report London, 2011 05 28

Education

We are again indebted to Chris George for running our ESU Canada Educational Projects. Even as we meet we have two candidates in the other London taking part in the International Public Speaking Competition sponsored by HSBC. I was pleased to see two 'out-of-towners' at our Public Speaking Competition in Montreal. John and Barbara Young of Ottawa Branch not only were there but helped with the judging. They confirmed what I have been saying since we started this venture – the standard is high and it is well worth attending.

Fanny Collet was our candidate at the Shakespeare course held in Stratford (UK) last summer. Using the experience she had gained, Fanny ran a workshop for the competitors before Ottawa Branch's SHOP competition. This summer she has decided to return to the UK to apply for an apprenticeship with Trevor Nun who is directing Ralph Fiennes in *The Tempest*.

Finances

The financial information is best left to Martin Wickham but to the extent that it can be said of an organization running on a shoestring, the finances are in good shape.

Travel - International

Almost as soon as the 2011 AGM was over, Joyce and I left for Malta and Turkey to witness and celebrate the launches of the two newest members of the ESU. Both have the organization and the will to prosper.

In October we attended the International Council meeting in Tirana, Albania, with a long weekend in Athens *en route*. Albania was very welcoming which made the social aspects of the time we spent there very pleasant.

2010 was also the year for my son and I to take in a Formula 1 Grand Prix. In between the Malta/Turkey and Greece/Albania trips, I visited Germany, Belgium, Denmark, Norway and Sweden. If you add changing planes in Paris and three overnight stops in Rome, that adds up to 9 countries in 5 months.

Branches

Our four Branches are still meeting regularly and are, more or less, holding their own. Ottawa has continued to invite the Royal Commonwealth Society and Monarchist League members to some of their events which helped to swell the numbers. Ottawa revived an old tradition with a St George's Day Dinner. The evening opened with a rousing, "Once more into the breach ... Cry, 'God for Harry, England and St George'" by Peter Sarty who was chosen and coached by Caroline Coltman, Nepean High School. Ms Coltman's entries in Ottawa Branch's SHOP competition have had more 'podium' finishes than any other school.

Projects

Last year I offered a list of six projects (and later added a 7th) which, I felt, could be undertaken by teams of two or three members. It included having a candidate at the Shakespeare Summer School and this was the only one taken up.

International Council

The meeting in Tirana was mainly concerned with revising the constitution of the Council. I have found myself somewhat at odds with the direction proposed by the Director-General. However, as Mike Lake has resigned, having achieved everything he wanted to in the ESU, things may change. My main concern is that so much has been taken off the agenda and conducted by e-mail, that the need for meetings is being reduced to zero.

The 2011 meeting will be in Philadelphia in conjunction with the AGM of the ESU of the USA, in early October. Canada is allowed two delegates plus observers.

World Members' Conferences

There will be a WMC in Istanbul in 2012. Details are not yet available. I have suggested that there must be a centennial WMC in 2018 and it should be in London. This would leave a 6 year gap – my suggestion is to have either several Regional Conferences in 2015 or hold a WMC on a cruise ship.

Iceland

The launch of ESU Iceland will be held, volcanoes permitting, in just over a week from now. Joyce and I will represent Canada. You may have seen the Chairman of the ESU Iceland Steering Committee, Eliza Reid, on CBC news, reporting on the eruption.

The Future

This year is the last time I can stand for re-election. Jim Allan is about to end his terms as Secretary. Martin Wickham has said that he will continue to support me by remaining as Treasurer. The question is what happens next. No candidates are rushing forward to take any of these positions. Ottawa Branch may find itself without a President when Don Macpherson retires at the AGM next month. London Branch is already in a similar position.

This must be a matter for serious debate.

Appreciation

My thanks go first to Jim Allen. Jim has decided not to continue as Secretary and he will be missed. To Martin Wickham for the many hours he contributes to our organization and particularly for keeping us on the right side of the government. I would also like to single out Wilma Gummow for special thanks. Wilma and I exchange e-mails twice a month (by actual count over the past year) and hers are always full of encouragement and/or wisdom. To my editorial board (for both *THE SURVEY* and *Résumé*) who also cooks my dinner. Finally, to all our members, for keeping the spirit of the ESU alive.

John Wright
President