

**NATIONAL SECTIONS COUNCIL REPORT  
MID-WINTER MEETING 2000**

Glenda Cole, Chair  
National Sections Council

**OVERVIEW:**

The 29 National Sections and NSC Executive have been very active since the 1999 Annual Meeting. The accomplishments of each Section are too numerous to list in detail in this document, however, this report highlights the scope of activities in which Sections have been involved and outlines Section Executive members' priorities and concerns as they strive to achieve their ultimate goal of providing the highest quality service to retain current and attract new members.

NSC Executive is delighted with the ongoing tremendous commitment of time and talent demonstrated by both Section Executive and committee members and by staff at the CBA's National Office. It should be noted that in excess of 400 volunteers from across Canada are actively involved as Section Executive or committee members.

Over the past two years, NSC Executive surveyed members of each Section's Executive to determine how it might best assist Sections in achieving their goals. Those surveyed provided thoughtful and candid feedback to a variety of questions related to their Sections' activities, the role that NSC Executive had or might play in ensuring that Sections are positioned to achieve their objectives, the CBA's budget process, Section members' view of the CBA generally, etc. and this information has been invaluable in assisting NSC Executive in reformulating its role and prioritizing the resolution of issues facing Sections. NSC Executive has and continues to actively seek to implement the recommendations of those surveyed and has established an ongoing liaison process with Sections whereby NSC Executive members contact Chairs directly to follow up on issues raised during the survey process and to seek input into the deliberations of NSC Executive and the Board of Directors.

As recently as the October 1999 NSC meeting, Sections identified the following as priorities:

- **The critical need for the CBA to fund, develop and maintain the infrastructure necessary to allow Sections to communicate with their members via electronic means.**
  
- Sections view the provision of timely and relevant information to their members as being a critical and highly valuable member service. While many initiatives are underway in this area through the work of staff at the National Office, the fact that there are currently insufficient funds and resources devoted to supporting the development of this technology and

the time frames inherent in providing newsletters in traditional hard copy prevent Sections from completely achieving their objectives in this regard.

- **Sections are very appreciative of additional funding made available to them in recent years by the CBA and both Section volunteers and CBA staff recognize the need to be and are prudent in utilizing these funds to maximize benefits for Section members. However, additional funding is required to allow Sections to undertake further initiatives that Sections have identified as being crucial to retain members within and attract members to the CBA and their Sections.**
  - These initiatives include face to face business meetings, continuing legal education programs (whether delivered in person or via the Internet), increased legislative review and law reform activities, increased abilities to liaise with organizations such as the ABA, and the development of Section websites.
- **The issues facing CBA Branches, Conferences, Committees and staff and therefore, the Board of Directors, are of equal concern to members of Sections and Sections wish to ensure that they play a meaningful role in assisting the Board in addressing these issues. Branch and National Section Executives are able to reach out to a huge number of CBA members due to the fact that so many join the CBA in order to and do participate in their activities. Therefore, Section representatives can and wish to be an important and effective ally of the Board in addressing issues facing and marketing the CBA to current and prospective members and a link to CBA members across Canada.**
  - At the October NSC meeting, Sections received presentations and provided feedback in regard to a number of the issues discussed by CBA Board members in October (e.g. marketing the fee increase, addressing the results of the Angus Reed survey, formulating and fulfilling the CBA's corporate participation policy and marketing strategy, how to ensure that the work of the CBA is transparent to all members). Sections appreciate the fact that they are now represented on the Board of Directors and believe that the discussion of Section issues that occurs at the Board table and the discussion of Board issues at the NSC table will enhance the quality of the deliberations of both groups.

## **ACTIVITIES:**

### **1. 11TH ANNUAL JOINT CBA/ DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE MEETING (OCTOBER 22, 1999):**

In excess of 180 delegates (the largest number of lawyers ever in attendance) participated in the 11th annual meeting between representatives of 22 National Sections and their Department of Justice counterparts. The format of the day's activities was changed to allow full day discussions between attendees. Copies of the agendas for these meetings are available from Holly Doerksen, Director of National Sections. Many of the discussions included an exchange of views as to ways the relationship between the two organizations could be enhanced and, in some cases, it was strongly recommended that Justice lawyers serve as members of Section Executives.

Deputy Minister of Justice Morris Rosenberg attended the reception at the end of the day and commented on the critical importance of the close relationship that has developed between the CBA and the Department over the years and through the auspices of this meeting.

### **2. NATIONAL SECTIONS COUNCIL MEETING (OCTOBER 23, 1999):**

25 Sections were represented at this meeting. Sections were very pleased to welcome Eugene Meehan Q.C. and Diana Lowe, Executive Director of the Canadian Forum on Civil Justice, as guests at this meeting.

The agenda for and minutes of this meeting are available from Holly Doerksen. In addition to discussing NSC Executive's survey findings and action plans and the issues noted earlier in this report, Sections provided an update on their activities, expressed high satisfaction with their meetings with Justice representatives and formulated plans to work together to undertake initiatives to benefit their members.

### **3. LEGISLATION AND LAW REFORM ACTIVITIES:**

Members of 9 National Sections (Criminal Justice, Citizenship and Immigration, Taxation (through the Joint CBA/CICA Tax Committee), Family, Business, Constitutional and Human Rights, Administrative, Labour and Employment, and Charities and Non Profit Law) contributed to 14 of the 21 submissions completed by the CBA since September 1, 1999.

In total, 53 submissions were prepared by the CBA during 1999. The majority of these were prepared with the assistance of one or more Sections.

#### **4. EMERGING PROFESSIONAL ISSUES INITIATIVES (EPII)/PUBLIC INTEREST INTERVENTION PROJECTS/UNIFORM LAW CONFERENCE OF CANADA (ULCC):**

Several Section volunteers participate on various CBA committees or otherwise contribute to CBA initiatives co-ordinated under EPII or CBA projects such as that involving legal aid. In addition, funds were recently allocated to allow the Executive of the National Real Property Section to meet to support the work of the CBA/Federation of Law Societies' three year Real Estate Project.

Sections have also become increasingly involved in the work of the ULCC. For example, the Criminal Justice Section considers possible resolutions and represents the CBA at the ULCC annually. The Business Law Section is participating in a multi-year project addressing the harmonization of commercial law and both Sections are expected to attend the August 2000 ULC Conference.

#### **5. CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION:**

13 Sections are involved in the development of 20 CLE programs scheduled for the 2000 Annual Meeting in Halifax. In addition, CLE programs sponsored by the Competition Law and jointly by the Administrative and Labour and Employment Law Sections were held during the fall of 1999 and 6 programs are scheduled to be held during the spring.

A very exciting development for Sections is the Internet CLE technology pioneered through a partnership between the CBA and the University of Ottawa. This technology has enabled Sections to deliver CLE via the Internet, thereby saving their members both time and costs. By way of example, the Law Practice Management and Technology Section, together with the CLE Committee, is presenting a six-part Internet delivered CLE series on law practice management and technology education over the period February 7 to March 13.

The Competition, Environmental, Tax, Aboriginal, and Construction Law Sections offer annual, increasingly successful programs. By way of example of these programs' success, it is noteworthy that the CLE Department has had to develop a waiting list for the Tax Law Section's Sixth Annual Program in May 2000.

The International Law and Sales and Commodity Tax Sections are involved in organizing the first of what will be annual conferences on public and private international law. This conference will be held during May, 2000. It is noteworthy that the organizing committee for this conference also includes representatives from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Revenue Canada, the Department of Justice, the academic community, and the Canadian International Trade Tribunal.

## **6. FEDERAL COURT BENCH AND BAR LIAISON COMMITTEE:**

NSC Executive were delighted when the members of the Federal Court expressed interest in resuming the activity of this Committee in 1999. The new Committee's first meeting was held during December 1999. Committee members are nominated by Sections and serve to bring forward practice related issues identified by Sections to the members of the court.

A direct liaison between this Committee and the Public Sector Lawyers Conference was also established in 1999.

## **7. MEETINGS:**

24 Sections have planned business meetings to be held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting in Halifax. Some of these meetings will include updates from Justice counterparts and/or presentations on substantive legal issues.

8 Sections held business meetings during the fall of 1999 and 11 are expected to meet during the spring of 2000.

## **8. COMMUNICATION ISSUES:**

Several Sections (and particularly the Insurance, Municipal and Environmental Law Sections) have made significant progress with the development of their home pages and several other Sections are starting to provide individualized content for their members. Basic information for all Sections will be posted in the coming weeks.

Sections continue to be active in publishing newsletters and also continue to receive positive feedback from their members in response to these. Since the Annual Meeting, seven newsletters have been published. Twenty editions are expected to be published during the spring and summer, in addition to our National Sections Council newsletter.

## **QUESTION OR COMMENTS?:**

I would be pleased to discuss the work of the CBA'S 29 National Sections or to respond to any questions or comments. Please do not hesitate to contact me with your views at (403) 268-5182 or by e-mail at [gcole@gov.calgary.ab.ca](mailto:gcole@gov.calgary.ab.ca).