

CANADIAN GEOTECHNICAL CONFERENCES 1947 TO 1987

by W.J. Eden & G.C. McRostie

In 1987 the Canadian Geotechnical Society will hold its 40th annual Geotechnical Conference in Regina. As such it will be continuing one of the longest series of Geotechnical conferences in Engineering. The writers of this note wish to look back over the past 39 conferences as to how the conferences have evolved and have changed in character. One of the writers (G.C.M.) has been privileged to attend every conference with the exception of the 13th and can contribute from personal recollections. The account will conclude with a list of past Conferences including a note on their proceedings.

The E.I.C. annual General meeting in Winnipeg in February 1945 had one technical session featuring soil mechanics papers by G.B. Williams, then of the Manitoba Department of Public Works, and by the late R. Peterson of P.F.R.A. in Saskatoon. This is believed to be the first technical session featuring soil mechanics as a title, held in Canada. 1945 saw the establishment of the Associate Committee on Soil and Snow Mechanics by the National Research Council of Canada. Its first chairman was Prof. R.F. Legget of the University of Toronto, who gave courses in Soil Mechanics at the Civil Engineering Department. One of the tasks of this Committee was to promote and stimulate research on the engineering aspects of the terrain of Canada including soil mechanics. When it was learned that Dr. L.F. Cooling and Dr. G.G. Meyerhof* of the Building Research Station of Garston, England would be visiting Canada early in 1947, the Associate Committee decided to hold a Civilian Soil Mechanics Conference in Ottawa in April 1947. Invitations to attend were extended to all individuals and organizations in Canada known to be interested in the topic. On April 28 and 29, 1947, some 40 individuals, 9 of who are now members of C.G.S.,

gathered in Ottawa for the first conference.

The first conference consisted of a series of reports from individuals describing their activities in the newly discovered discipline of Soil Mechanics at various sites in Canada. One of the more comprehensive contributions was made by N.W. McLeod describing the airport runway studies he was conducting for the Department of Transport. The proceedings also contained a list of 12 laboratories with their equipment and the soil tests which were being conducted. The list was divided equally between universities and public service organizations. At that time there were no consultants deriving their livelihood from work in soil mechanics.

The second conference, also held in Ottawa, in December 1948 was mainly devoted to reports of individuals who had attended the 2nd International Conference in Rotterdam that year. The third conference was held in Lethbridge Alberta and featured a field trip to the newly completed St. Mary's Dam.

From the 4th to the 12th Conferences, the pattern was two in Ottawa with the 6th, 9th and 12th being held at Winnipeg, Vancouver and Saskatoon. Over this period, there had been a significant increase in activities in Soil Mechanics, both in the number of practitioners and in the level of activities. Local study groups had been established in the major cities and were holding meetings on a regular basis. By 1958, there were a number of Geotechnical Consultants with growing practices. Within the Engineering Institute of Canada there were some discussions taking place about the establishment of a Geotechnical Engineering Division. By the time of the 15th Conference in Montreal in 1961, the Geotechnical Engineering Division

undertook the organization of the Conference in association with the Associate Committee. The 16th Conference in Edmonton in 1962, had joint sponsorship by the Associate Committee and the Geotechnical Engineering Division (G.E.D.).

1963 saw the beginnings of the Canadian Geotechnical Journal as a private venture, but with the full co-operation of the Associate Committee and the G.E.D. This Journal was to have first call on the papers presented to the Conference, deemed worthy of subsequent publication. By this time, many presentations made to the Conference were of outstanding technical merit. From 1963 to 1971 the G.E.D. arranged the conferences.

1972 saw the inauguration of the Canadian Geotechnical Society, which adopted the conference as its annual meeting. By this time, there were two full days of technical sessions and the practice of binding the contributions together as a preprint volume was started. Many of the papers were finally published in the Canadian Geotechnical Journal. When the Engineering Geology and Rock Mechanics Divisions were established within the Society, the Conference was expanded to 3 full days of technical sessions. This is the situation at present.

The above notes attempt to trace the history of the Canadian Geotechnical Conferences over 40 years. It is a story of remarkable growth, and is linked to the roots and growth of the Canadian Geotechnical Society. We can take pride in observing that our Conferences have been well run, well attended, and have contained serious and beneficial learning experiences for a high percentage of members.

**G.G. Meyerhof subsequently came to Canada and in 1972 became the first President of the Canadian Geotechnical Society.*

CANADA

The Canadian Geotechnical Society Annual Conferences 1947-1986

1st 1947 April 28-29	1947 Civilian Soil Mechanics Conference National Research Council Sussex Dr., Ottawa, Ontario Organizing Committee Chairman - R.F. Legget	16th 1962 September 12-14	16th Canadian Soil Mechanics Conference University of Alberta - Edmonton Jointly sponsored by ACGR & G.E.D.-EIC Chairman Organizing Committee - R.M. Hardy
2nd 1948 December 13-14	1948 Civilian Soil Mechanics Conference Montreal Rd. Laboratories National Research Council, Ottawa, Ontario Organizing Committee Chairman - R.F. Legget	17th 1963 September 12	17th Canadian Soil Mechanics Conference Carleton University, Ottawa (1st Conference sponsored entirely by G.E.D. of EIC) Chairman of Organizing Committee G.C. McRostie, Ottawa
3rd 1949 September 9-10	1949 Civilian Soil Mechanics Conference Marquis Hotel, Lethbridge, Alberta Conference organized by R. Peterson and P.F.R.A. Staff	18th 1964 December 3-4	18th Annual Canadian Soil Mechanics Conference Hart House, University of Toronto, Chairman of Organizing Committee A.G. Stermac, Toronto
4th 1950 December 14-15	4th Annual Canadian Soil Mechanics Conference Montreal Rd. Laboratories National Research Council, Ottawa, Ontario Organized by R.F. Legget and D.B.R.-NRC Staff	19th 1966 October 5-7	19th Canadian Soil Mechanics Conference Hotel Vancouver, Vancouver, B.C. Chairman of Organizing Committee - C.E. Leonoff, Klohn Leonoff Associates, Vancouver
5th 1951 January 10-11	5th Annual Canadian Soil Mechanics Conference Montreal Rd. Laboratories National Research Council, Ottawa, Ontario Organized by R.F. Legget and D.B.R.-NRC Staff	20th 1967 September 14-15	20th Canadian Soil Mechanics Conference Laval University, Quebec Chairman of Organizing Committee LaRochelle, Laval University
6th 1952 December 15-16	6th Canadian Soil Mechanics Conference University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba Chairman Organizing Committee - Dean A.E. Macdonald, University of Manitoba	21st 1968 September 12-13	21st Canadian Soil Mechanics Conference International Inn, Winnipeg, Manitoba Chairman Organizing Committee - A.O. Dyregrov
7th 1953 December 10-11	7th Canadian Soil Mechanics Conference Division of Building Research National Research Council, Ottawa, Ontario Chairman Organizing Committee - R.F. Legget	22nd 1969 December 8-9	22nd Canadian Soil Mechanics Conference Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario Chairman Organizing Committee Townsend, Queen's University
8th 1954 December 16-17	8th Canadian Soil Mechanics Conference Division of Building Research National Research Council, Ottawa, Ontario Chairman Organizing Committee - R.F. Legget	23rd 1970 November 19-20	23rd Canadian Soil Mechanics Conference Banff School of Fine Arts, Banff, Alberta Chairman Organizing Committee Dr. Grant Ross, University of Calgary
9th 1955 December 15-16	9th Canadian Soil Mechanics Conference University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C. Chairman Organizing Committee - C.F. Ripley - Ripley Klohn & Leonoff	24th 1971 September 2-3	24th Canadian Soil Mechanics Conference Nova Scotia Technical College, Halifax, N.S. Chairman Organizing Committee Dr. J.D. Brown, NSTO
10th 1956 December 17-18	10th Canadian Soil Mechanics Conference Electrical Engineering Conference Room National Research Council, Ottawa, Ontario Chairman Organizing Committee - R.F. Legget Guest of Honour - K. Terzaghi	25th 1972 December 7-8	25th Canadian Geotechnical Conference University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Ontario Chairman of Organization Committee Dr. D.H. Shields, University of Ottawa
11th 1957 December 9-10	11th Canadian Soil Mechanics Conference Electrical Engineering Conference Room National Research Council, Ottawa, Ontario Chairman Organizing Committee - R.F. Legget assisted by D.B.R. Staff	26th 1973 October 18-19	26th Canadian Geotechnical Conference Ontario Institute for Studies in Education - Toronto, Ontario Chairman of Organizing Committee J.I. Adams, Ontario Hydro
12th 1958 December 8-9	12th Canadian Soil Mechanics Conference University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Sask. Chairman Organizing Committee - R. Peterson and P.F.R.A. Saskatoon	27th 1974 November 7-8	27th Canadian Geotechnical Conference Macdonald Hotel, Edmonton, Alberta Chairman of Organizing Committee M.C. Harris, Hardy Associates
13th 1959 September 10-11	13th Canadian Soil Mechanics Conference Nova Scotia Technical College, Halifax, N.S. Chairman Organizing Committee - G.G. Meyerhof N.S.T.C.	28th 1975 October 8-10	28th Canadian Geotechnical Conference Mount Royal Hotel, Montreal, Quebec Chairman of Organizing Committee Dr. R.N. Yong, McGill University
14th 1960 October 13-14	14th Canadian Soil Mechanics Conference Sheraton Brock Hotel, Niagara Falls, Ontario Chairman Organizing Committee - D.J. Bazett Ontario Hydro	29th 1976 October 13-15	29th Canadian Geotechnical Conference Bayshore Hotel, Vancouver, B.C. Chairman Organizing Committee - Dr. R.G. Campanella, U.B.C.
15th 1961 November 8-9	15th Canadian Soil Mechanics Conference Queen Elizabeth Hotel, Montreal, Quebec Chairman Organizing Committee - F.L. Peckover C.N. Rail as Chairman of G.E.D. EIC	30th 1977 October 5-7	30th Canadian Geotechnical Conference Bessborough Hotel, Saskatoon, Sask. Chairman Organizing Committee Dr. J. Krahn, University of Saskatchewan

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- 31st 1978**
October 18-20
31st Canadian Geotechnical Conference
International Inn, Winnipeg, Manitoba
Chairman Organizing Committee
L.D. Keil, Acres Consulting Services
- 32nd 1979**
September 26-28
32nd Canadian Geotechnical Conference
Chateau Frontenac, Quebec, Quebec
Chairman Organizing Committee
Dr. F. Tavenas, Laval University
- 33rd 1980**
September 22-26
33rd Canadian Geotechnical Conference
Palliser Hotel, Calgary, Alberta
Chairman Organizing Committee
B. Michelborough, Golder Associates
- 34rd 1981**
September 28-October 2
34th Canadian Geotechnical Conference
Playhouse Theatre, Fredericton, N.B.
Chairman Organizing Committee
Dr. A. Landva, University of New Brunswick, Fredericton
- 35th 1982**
September 28-30
35th Canadian Geotechnical Conference
Queen Elizabeth Hotel, Montreal, Quebec
Chairman Organizing Committee
J.J. Pare, S.E.B.J., Montreal
- 36th 1983**
June 22
36th Canadian Geotechnical Conference
(Part of Pan Am 83)
Hotel Vancouver, Vancouver, B.C.
Chairman Organizing Committee -
R.B. Benson - Pan Am 83 Chairman
D.R. McCreath - Canada Day Chairman

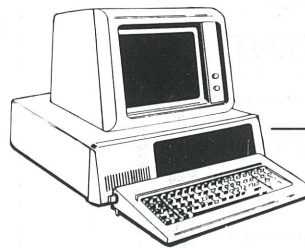
- 37th 1984**
September 16-21
37th Canadian Geotechnical Conference
1st day of I.S.L. 84
Sheraton Centre Hotel, Toronto, Ontario
Chairman of I.S.L. 84
J.L. Seychuk, Golder Associates
- 38th 1985**
September 25-27
38th Canadian Geotechnical Conference
Four Seasons Hotel, Edmonton, Alberta
Chairman Organizing Committee
R.B. Wallace, E.B.A. Engineering, Edmonton
- 39th 1986**
August 27-30
39th Canadian Geotechnical Conference
Chateau Laurier Hotel, Ottawa, Ontario
Chairman Organizing Committee
G.E. Bauer, Carleton University

Notes: In 1965 the 6th International Conference of I.S.S.M.F.E. was held in Montreal. No Canadian conference was held in 1965. In 1983, the 36th Conference took the form of a one day session at the VII PanAm Conference held in Vancouver. Similarly in 1984, the Canadian Conference was a one day session of the 4th International Symposium on Landslides held in Toronto. Proceedings at Conferences 1st to 16th were published as technical memoranda of the Associate Committee on Geotechnical Research, which sponsored the conferences. Photocopies of these proceedings may be obtained through the National Research Council of Canada. The 17th to 24th Conference were arranged by the Geotechnical Engineering Division of the Engineering Institute of Canada. No proceedings as such were published, but many of the papers presented have been published by the Canadian Geotechnical Journal and are identified as such. Beginning in 1972, the Canadian Geotechnical Society organized the conferences. Papers continue to be published by the Canadian Geotechnical Journal if submitted by the individual authors. Preprint volumes exist for some of the conferences after 1972. Society headquarters can give advice on their availability.

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