

Communiqué

Number 10

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Lay representation on the Governing Body of the Legal Profession was given lengthy consideration by the 34 Benchers who met today. They voted in favour of inviting two lay members of the Law Society Council to attend Convocation and meetings of its Committees on a trial basis. The innovation will be reviewed at the end of one year.

Convocation approved in principle today of a proposal made by a Special Committee on Specialization in the Practice of Law. The 13-man Committee, which included representatives of the law schools and of the Canadian Bar Association, proposed that the Society discharge the responsibilities of establishing and maintaining standards to be met by those seeking specialist qualification and conduct qualifying courses and examinations using the facilities of the Bar Admission Course and the assistance of the approved law schools. Many details remain to be discussed to ensure the orderly development of this new phase of legal service, including the enactment of rules of professional conduct covering such matters as advertising. The Committee's Report stressed that notwithstanding the legitimate demands for specialization the importance of the general practitioner has in no way diminished and that, particularly in areas outside urban centres, the public must be assured of an adequate supply of competent general practitioners.

The Report's main points in brief are: that two or three areas of specialization only be provided for at the outset - general practitioners to continue to practise in all fields, including those in which specialist qualifications exist - specialists to be able if they wish to continue in general practice and not be restricted to their specialty - provision for "grandfathers" with at least 10 years' practice substantially devoted to the field of specialization - for all others seeking specialist qualification, courses of instruction plus 5 years' active practice substantially devoted to the chosen field - for all specialists compulsory attendance at prescribed courses of continuing education to maintain certification - specialists to be allowed to qualify in only two or at the most three areas depending on the nature of their practice - identification of specialists on letterheads, office signs, professional cards, telephone directories and other approved publications, including Legal Aid Plan and Referral Service information. All Members will receive the full Report and are invited to send their comments and suggestions to the Secretary.

A substantial number of the profession want decisions of the Ontario Municipal Board reported. The Legislative Committee reviewing the Ontario Municipal Board has reacted favourably to a request that the Board's decisions be published. In the meantime the Society will provide, through the Great Library, a page index service at a cost of up to \$75 per subscription.

Kenneth Jarvis
Secretary