
The CSBMCB enters its 50th year; the beginnings

David B. Smith

(once Editor, CBS Bulletin)

I have been asked to remember some memories about the start of our society in the mid-50's. I find that there are only wisps left and practically none of my associates of those days are still around to help fill out. It was a pleasure to phone the ones I found, but their memories are no more robust than mine.

Compared to the facilities I left at the University of Toronto in 1950, the Applied Biology Division of the National Research Council was very up-to-date. Bill Cook had equipped his lab with a Spinco ultracentrifuge (very low serial number), Tiselius electrophoresis, fraction collectors that worked, practically everything you needed for your project could be obtained. And there was a group of young gung-ho biochemists getting set to do great things. They began to get impatient with the venerable Canadian Physiological Society and the old fogies in Toronto and Montreal who ran it. After all, if you had a paper on the chemistry of hemoglobin, it was likely to be put in a section on Heart and

Lung. So they agitated for a new Society. There must have been others elsewhere but they are not in my memories. Things came to a head at a meeting at the University of Ottawa in 1957 – a meeting chaired with great decisiveness by Gordon Butler.

Gordon's article, Recollections on the Foundation of the Canadian Biochemical Society, appeared in Vol. XIX No.1 June 1982 of the Bulletin of the Canadian Biochemical Society. There are references to Gordon Young's book and Art Mako's article, but these add little more. Art's article does quote from meeting minutes: "A meeting of biochemists was held at 8:00 pm on October 9, 1957 in the Auditorium of the Medical Building of the University of Ottawa. The meeting was under the chairmanship of Dr. G.C. Butler and Dr. D.H. Laughland acted as secretary. Seventy persons were in attendance and their names and address were recorded." I have suggested to the Editor that Gordon's paper be reprinted.