JOHN G. RUTHERFORD AND THE CONTROVERSIAL STANDARDS OF EDUCATION AT THE ONTARIO VETERINARY COLLEGE FROM 1864 TO 1920

C. A. V. Barker*

In April 1877, a lingering controversy of 12 years duration between Andrew Smith, Principal of the Ontario Veterinary College, Toronto, and Duncan McNab McEachran, Principal of the Montreal Veterinary College, Montreal, surfaced in the first issues of the new veterinary journal, The American Veterinary Review, published by the United States Veterinary Medical Association. The subject of the controversy was veterinary education, particularly admission standards. Briefly, Smith’s standards were not high enough in McEachran’s opinion resulting in graduates¹ who were little better trained than the common farrier and empiric. John Gunion Rutherford entered the Toronto College in October 1877, just after the fourth long article by McEachran was published and Smith had replied in a letter to the editor.

A definitive biography on John Gunion Rutherford V.S. (Ont.), C.M.G.,² H.A.R.C.V.S.,³ D.V.Sc. (Toronto), first Veterinary Director General of Canada, has not been written. A brief biography was presented in 1929 by his personal physician (16) and further information relative to his efforts to organize veterinarians in Ontario was published in 1976 (7). Parts of these biographies are related here and supplemented to provide a background for the succeeding account of his continuing efforts after 1889 to raise the standards of veterinary education in Canada and particularly at the Ontario Veterinary College. What role he played with the French speaking college in Quebec is not known nor what relationship he had with the principal of the Montreal Veterinary College before or after it became a faculty of McGill University.

Controversy still exists in Canada concerning the admission requirements for the veterinary colleges and the contents of their...
curricula. It may therefore be appropriate to reveal events in which Rutherford was very prominent and gave continuing leadership. Comparisons of the two periods and the methods employed to bring about changes will be omitted but certain similarities may become obvious.

Rutherford arrived in Canada from Scotland in 1874 at the age of 17 years. His educational background in Scotland was characterized by studious habits under private tuition and at the Glasgow High School. On leaving school he became a student of farming at the Phillipshaug farm in Ayrshire but only for a brief period before departing for Canada to work his way through the Ontario Agricultural College, Guelph, completing his one year course in 1876. His academic achievements there marked him as an honor (class) student. While attending the O.A.C. he received lectures in the veterinary art from E.A.A. Grange, a recent graduate (1873) of the Ontario Veterinary College, Toronto, who practised in Guelph. In 1877 Rutherford registered for the two sessions of training offered at Andrew Smith's College, culminating in March 1879 with an academic record equal to that previously demonstrated at the O.A.C. and winning in open competition with 37 others the Gold Medal for the best general examination.

Following graduation, Rutherford went to Woodstock, Ontario, and practised in partnership with Wm. Irvine, M.R.C.V.S., a graduate of the London College. Irvine and Rutherford had their office upstairs on the east corner of Market Square. Soon afterward they moved to the north side of Princess Street, three doors east of Riddell Street. The partnership dissolved in March 1880 and Rutherford conducted his practice from a hotel. In 1879 he was elected a Director of the newly incorporated Ontario Veterinary Association but he served for only one year. From 1881 to 1884 he practised in Indiana and New York states in locations where horse and cattle breeding predominated. It was most likely the famous herds of cattle in Oxford and Brant counties that attracted him to Woodstock. Probably he went to the U.S.A. for more experience with horses. In 1884, and not married, he returned to Canada to open a practice in Portage La Prairie, Manitoba. His reason for selecting this town is unknown. Like other parts of Canada east and west of Ontario there was a shortage of qualified veterinary surgeons. There was, of course, the veterinary section of the North West Mounted Police, active since 1879 in attempting to control contagious diseases of livestock but these men did not practise otherwise. Perhaps Rutherford appreciated the development that was occurring in Manitoba's rural areas with the railway crossing Canada at that time bringing the loads of immigrants who were taking up sections of land and he gambled on Portage La Prairie as a future place for a good practice.

In 1885 the Riel Rebellion interrupted his practice for a short time when he was called to serve as a veterinary staff officer in the North West Territories Field Force, thus becoming a Riel Rebellion veteran and recipient of the veteran's medal. In 1887 he was married and in 1888 his only son was born. Unfortunately, this son died at six months of age of *Tabes mesenterica*. Perhaps this event was the reason for his intense desire to eradicate tuberculosis from Canadian cattle when tuberculin became available and he was in a commanding position as Veterinary Director General in Ottawa.

In 1889 Rutherford and nine other veterinarians in Manitoba realized the inadequacy of the existing veterinary legislation of Manitoba in protecting the public against the practices of empirics, sometimes known as charlatans and quacks. A meeting of these veterinarians in December 1889 formed a new Veterinary Association of Manitoba (30). Rutherford was elected secretary-treasurer and a Council member. The organizing members were all graduates of the Ontario Veterinary College. In March the Veterinary Association Act 1890 was assented to by the Manitoba legislature and the veterinarians of Manitoba were then governed by an Act that was remarkable in Canada for it required veterinary surgeons to be licensed to practice and licensed only after examination by a provincial association board of examiners. Thus the profession controlled those who professed to be qualified to practise and gave the general public protection from the quacks. Undoubtedly, Rutherford had been the guiding person for this legislation. In 1891 Rutherford was re-elected to the Council and also as secretary-treasurer. About this time he became interested in provincial politics and in 1892 was elected as a Liberal member of Parliament. For the next eight years he was in either provincial or federal politics for in 1896 he was elected to the House of Commons, Ottawa. Veterinary politics also concerned him during this period.

In 1892 while he was secretary-treasurer of the Manitoba Association a motion was carried at the annual meeting instructing the Council to "take such action in the matter of qualified
practitioners as they may deem proper and for the best interests of the profession, more especially as to the elevation of the standing of the Ontario Veterinary College”. What prompted this interest in educational standards is not revealed in the minutes of the meeting but it may have been that the Board of Examiners of which Rutherford was a member had seen from the few examinations of 1890–92 that the applicants for registration were lacking in the qualities thought to be desirable in Manitoba. In March 1892 Rutherford was instructed to write to the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons regarding the status of the Ontario Veterinary College and also to the Secretary of the Agriculture and Arts Association of Ontario to ascertain their connection with the College. In 1893 Rutherford was elected President of the Manitoba Association, continuing afterward on the Board of Examiners and Council until the end of 1897. It was during this period that Manitoba tightened its requirements for registration to practise.

Rutherford in 1894 believed the Manitoba veterinary act to be better than the British act passed in 1881, but it really was not adequate from Rutherford’s point of view because persons were being examined and admitted who obviously had a very poor educational background – both in preveterinary and veterinary qualifications. The association for five years had been active in prosecuting empirics but it was obvious from the results of the findings of the Board of Examiners that the Ontario graduates who were taking the oral and written examinations had qualifications that were not much above the empirics. These observations applied not only to Ontario graduates but also to those who had qualified at Laval in Quebec. Graduates of the Montreal Veterinary College were not open to criticism nor those who had taken in the United States a course of studies extending over a three year period. At the semi annual meeting of the Manitoba association in 1895 the following was presented and carried: It was resolved upon motion of Rutherford and Hinman “that the secretary be instructed to communicate with the Western Veterinary Association and to proffer that body the hearty sympathy and cooperation of the Veterinary Association of Manitoba, in its timely efforts to elevate the status of the profession by lengthening the curriculum and raising the standard of the matriculation and final examination of the Ontario Veterinary College. It was also resolved that in view of the rapid strides with which the veterinary profession has recently advanced, and the increased amount of scientific knowledge rendered necessary thereby it is advisable that the Ontario Veterinary College should make an effort to keep abreast of the times. That therefore applicants for admission to the college be required to pass a matriculation examination which shall demonstrate their ability to read and write the English language correctly and to understand the rules of arithmetic as far as decimal fractions. That the matriculation examination be conducted by a board of Examiners entirely independent and apart from the faculty of the College: that the curriculum be extended to three sessions of six months each and that students be required to practice at least four months of each vacation with a duly qualified practitioner. That the examination for the diploma shall be upon the practical as well as the scientific attainments of the candidates. That the examiners be elected by the graduates of the College present in Canada in the manner similar to that in which the members of the Council of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons are chosen. That the secretary be instructed to forward copies of these resolutions to Professor Smith; to Henry Wade, secretary of the Arts and Agricultural Association and to the various veterinary periodicals. Resolved at the next session of the legislature of Manitoba this association should ask for an amendment to the Veterinary Association Act of 1890 whereby subsection (c) of section 4 be made to apply only to graduates of schools having a curriculum of at least three sessions of six months each and striking out the words – “in any part of her Majesty’s Dominion” where they occur in the aforesaid subsection.”

In 1896 the Veterinary Act of 1890 was revised in accordance with the Rutherford motion, however, there was a delay until 1899 in putting the requirements into effect. Rutherford wrote to Principal Andrew Smith in 1896 of his concern about O.V.C. standards (31) but Smith’s reply is unknown. Smith had been fending off since 1866 the criticisms of the standards applicable for admission and awarding the diploma on completion of the two year (12 months) curriculum at his college in Toronto. Smith started his college with the British system as a model, i.e. two

4(c) Persons possessing a diploma or certificate of admission as veterinary surgeons in any part of Her Majesty’s Dominion by any body or association empowered by law to grant such diploma or certificate upon compliance with the provisions of the next section of this Act.
sessions of six months and virtually no admission requirement concerning education. At 30 years of age in 1864 he was Principal and Professor and teaching the first entrants to his Upper Canada Veterinary School under the patronage of the Upper Canada Board of Agriculture (later the Agriculture and Arts Association). Assisting him in the winter courses in the veterinary art since 1863 was a classmate of Edinburgh 1861, Duncan McNab McEachran who practised in Woodstock, Ontario. They were Dick’s graduates but with differing ideas on veterinary education. Smith graduated at 27 years of age in comparison to McEachran who was only 20. Smith had a recommendation from Dick, presumably McEachran did not. Smith had only his diploma from the Highland Agricultural Society as.a graduate of the Edinburgh Veterinary College (V.S., Edin.) whereas McEachran on graduating had taken the examinations of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and was admitted to membership (1861) entitling him to use M.R.C.V.S. As a devoted Dick student Smith did not take the M.R.C.V.S. examinations,5 probably because Dick did not recommend them to his students (6). McEachran assisted Smith for three years until 1866 when he founded the Montreal Veterinary College, which awarded a V.S. Diploma. His entrance requirements were intended to be more strict than at the Ontario College but for nearly 12 years he was forced to have the same (20). During this time he tried to have Smith raise his standards for entrance and lengthen the curriculum but to no avail. Annual announcements of the Ontario Veterinary College prior to 1875 are apparently nonexistent. The announcement of 1875–76 contains the following statement: “The examinations take place in April and December of each year. Those students who desire to attend a third Session can pass at the end of the second Session, in April, a primary examination on Anatomy, Physiology and Materia Medica; and in December can pass a final examination on Veterinary Medicine and Surgery”. Smith was offering a two year compulsory course for a diploma but there was available for those who might take advantage of it a third session, complete with an examination but no special diploma.

In April 1877 just after accepting an F.R.C.V.S. (Primary Fellowship through invitation in February), McEachran gave voice to his views on veterinary education in the early issues of the American Veterinary Review, condemning the two session curriculum and the preceptorship for in-between sessions. During this same period Dick’s School and others in Britain with this system were severely criticized (21) by graduates of the system. The critics compared the short curriculum in Great Britain and Canada with the extensive curricula in Europe – four years or more for qualification.

McEachran expounded on the need for a three year course in Canada and an entrance examination that would exclude the persons who were being admitted – farriers, stock keepers, grooms and others who could barely read or write. The Ontario Veterinary College received perhaps more criticism than was deserved, nevertheless, what McEachran published was essentially valid. Graduates of Ontario were going into practice with but little more knowledge than the farriers who were abundant. They had a diploma which indicated they had more education than a farrier but sometimes not much more. There were of course exceptions and John Gunion Rutherford was one of these. What attracted him to the Ontario College is unknown. Perhaps it was his course from E.A.A. Grange while at the Agricultural College in Guelph; perhaps it was his love for horses; perhaps it

5 Smith became an M.R.C.V.S. in 1880 when the College revised its bylaws and admitted Dick graduates without examination. In 1882 he was made an Honorary Associate of the College and in 1886 he became a Fellow (F.R.C.V.S.) by examination.
was the common knowledge in rural Ontario that Smith's school was sending out graduates who were "practical" in their art.

McEachran announced in 1877 (20) that the Montreal curriculum would continue to be three years and more strict entrance requirements would be demanded. From this time onward until 1903, when the College closed, McEachran adhered to his opinions on raising the standards of veterinary education in Canada. Many well qualified graduates had been McEachran students, not the least of whom was Fred Torrance. Smith responded to McEachran's publications through letters to the American Veterinary Review (24). He took a trip to Great Britain and Europe in the summer of 1878, visiting veterinary colleges so that at the annual meeting of the Ontario Veterinary Association in December 1878 he was able to pass comments on facilities there. He did not indicate any intention of changing his method of managing his college; he had just enlarged his buildings in 1876 to accommodate the enlarging enrolment (1). Veterinary education was a popular subject for discussion at this time and since there was no Canadian veterinary journal the recently founded American Veterinary Review carried any and all articles from Canadian sources. The tenor of the correspondence favoured a three year curriculum and the several colleges founded in the United States about this period followed the advice proffered in the Review. In 1878 the American Veterinary College in New York, founded or reorganized in 1875, announced that the entrance requirement would be a matriculation examination or a good academical examination. In 1877 one Canadian voice besides Smith supported what Smith was steadfastly adhering to in his college. This person was J. S. Duncan (V.S., Ont. 1872) who justified the stand taken by Smith (5). Duncan had practised in Goderich, Ontario, after graduation and therefore probably knew how much a small farming community could appreciate the services of a trained veterinary surgeon. Ontario needed veterinary surgeons and Smith's College was the source.

In Great Britain for several years the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons had been trying to have the schools extend their courses to three years. Finally, in May 1877, the annual meeting was advised that the schools had agreed to extend the course as advocated by the College (7). The R.C.V.S. question of admission requirements was finally settled by agreement that the matriculation examination of the College of Preceptors would be used after 1877. McEachran in 1877 was therefore placing his college on a standing about equal to that soon to be accepted in Great Britain and the United States.

The raising of educational standards in 1877–78 in Canada, the United States, and Great Britain was beneficial to Andrew Smith and his two year course. Students who could not pass the entrance requirements in other schools applied for admission to Toronto and many were accepted. Enrolment began to increase and by 1888 Smith's college was so crowded that he had to enlarge his buildings (5). During the period 1880–89 he added a few faculty who taught at the University of Toronto, one assistant demonstrator of anatomy and J. T. Duncan who soon acquired the degree M.D. and became H.A.B.C.V.S. In 1889 there was eight on the staff of professors. To be admitted as a student the candidate had to present sufficient evidence that he possessed a good common school education, either by presentation of a certificate to that effect from the teacher under whom he studied, or in other ways satisfactory to the authorities. Failing in this the candidate would be required to pass an examination in reading, writing and spelling (25). The annual announcement of 1888–89 also states: "If any candidate should fail to pass the matriculation examination, he will be allowed to proceed with his professional studies on condition of passing the examination at any time before the commencement of his second session." During this same period Smith was praised at meetings of the Ontario Veterinary Association and he advertised the College as the most successful in America (18). In 1883 the O.V.A. president stated that the profession must look to the College as the fountain head to turn out graduates who would be an honor to the profession (10). At the annual O.V.A. meet-

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7Smith did not recommend this journal to his students in the annual announcements of the College.
nings of 1884 and 1885 however, Smith had to listen to members, graduates of his College, who raised the subject of a matriculation examination for admission thus elevating the status of the profession by obtaining a better class of students. Smith responded in 1885 by stating "the matriculating examinations of all the veterinary colleges on this continent are a farce; he was not opposed to a matriculation but would be unwilling to introduce it unless the other colleges made it a reality" (11). He also cited as examples of success George Fleming and W. Williams in Great Britain and other members of the profession who were Edinburgh graduates at the time of the two year course. The annual meeting of 1889 heard the retiring president report that on his recent trip to the Pacific Coast he met O.V.C. graduates who were competing very favourably with graduates of other colleges (12). Thus, in 1889 when Rutherford assisted in rejuvenating the Veterinary Association of Manitoba there were polite and not so polite suggestions that the Ontario Veterinary College should be changing its entrance requirements and curriculum to put it on the same or equal status as other North American colleges. Smith listened and defended his position, which he could do, for there was no one in Canada who could meet his reputation as a beloved professor who spoke with authority based on experience, recognized as an educator through honors bestowed by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons of Great Britain and sole owner of a very thriving veterinary college.

The foregoing biographical and historical details have briefly described some of the life of Rutherford and the times in which he studied and practised. What made him determined to enter the educational standards controversy is not known, but he took up the subject through the veterinary association of Manitoba and carried the issue for 30 years. Not only did he actively agitate to change the standards but he convinced other persons, notably F. Torrance and C. D. McGilvray, that the education of veterinary surgeons at the Toronto College was inadequate.

The revision of the Manitoba Act forced students from that province to attend a college with a three years program in the United States or to take a further year of training in a college other than Smith's if they graduated from the Toronto College. The revision momentarily reduced graduates of the two year course from seeking admission to Manitoba. Rutherford was elected president of the Association again in 1900 and Torrance as secretary-treasurer, however, this was Rutherford's last year as an officer or regular member of the association. In 1901 he was employed by the Dominion government to conduct tuberculin tests in Great Britain and in 1902 he was appointed successor to Duncan McEachran as Chief Veterinary Inspector for the federal government. In 1903, the teaching of veterinary science at McGill University was terminated for several reasons not the least being financial. McEachran had fought hard to keep high admission standards in at least one college in Canada but he had lost the fight. Smith may be considered by some to have won but in doing so he had been forced to make some changes and listen to unfavourable comments (2, 4, 28). In 1897 Smith incorporated the Ontario Veterinary College as a Limited company (8), and an affiliation was established with the University of Toronto. There was mentioned earlier the annual announcement statement that a third session

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could be taken if desired, but few students are known to have taken three sessions. The annual announcements from 1875-76 to 1897-98 contain the same statement referable to the third session. However, in the latter announcement there is also notice of a contemplated change in the period of study, probably to come into force in 1898-99. Was this a reaction to the Manitoba Act of 1896? In spite of this warning no change occurred as predicted in 1898-99 nor in successive announcements of a similar nature which appeared every year until the session of 1906-07. In the announcement for that session the following appeared: "Important Notice. Commencing in 1907. The Course at the Ontario Veterinary College will be extended from two years to three years. Students intending to enter at that time will therefore please take notice of this extension. Full particulars of the new course will be published later. This three year course will apply only to students entering in or after October 1st, 1907. Note Carefully. The above change will not affect students entering in October, 1906. Students entering then will be enrolled in the two years course. Absent from this announcement was the following which had been in every announcement since 1889-90 under the heading The Education of the Student. "This College has always aimed at imparting the instruction needed by the veterinary student within its own walls, and that instruction prepared specially with a view to fitting such student for his life work. In this connection the following extract from the Veterinary Review of September 1889, is worth reproducing:

Amalgamated faculties are scarcely any longer justifiable. Veterinary, and strictly veterinary teachings are indispensable, and it must be the chief effort of veterinary schools to acquire the power of conferring, in the degree of veterinary surgeons, a certification that its holder is 'every inch a (veterinarian) king,' and no usurping pretender, practising under a pseudo warrant, the principal function of which is the concealment of the ignorance and charlatanary of the holder - a possible danger which every means should be employed to prevent.

The value of the faculty must be estimated in reference to their ability to impart a sound theoretical and practical education, from a curriculum whose motto shall be 'constant improvement.'

It should be our grand aim to so train and qualify our students that they may be known as lacking nothing within the broad boundaries of the science which they cultivate and apply, and as being fully capable of overtopping and surpassing, beyond successful competition, the pretentious quack, even when armed with the deceptive and technical parchment which incompetent or designing legislators may sometimes be induced to authorize."

What had occurred during the period 1896-1907 to cause Andrew Smith to finally make the three year announcement? One obvious reason was advancing age. Another reason was continuing pressure to raise the standards for entrance to his College - pressure from the profession and the press. The incorporation of the College in 1897 may have been related to pressure put on the Agriculture and Arts Association which had for several years awarded the graduation diploma of the College. In 1894, an appeal was made to the Association by a deputation from the Western Ontario Veterinary Medical Association, requesting the production of better educated men, the teaching of preventive medicine and less emphasis of the horse (14). The Council of the Arts Association was petitioned by the W.O.V.M.A. to have the government assume control of the college; affiliate with Trinity or Toronto University and lengthen the tuition to three years. It would seem that Smith retaliated by incorporating, affiliating and warning applicants of possible change in the course length. He separated from the Agriculture and Arts Association in 1897 and changed the format of the graduation diploma certifying that the examiners the College had appointed considered the person named to be qualified to practise the Science of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery. No longer did the regulations of the Council of the Agriculture and Arts Association apply. In addition, the diploma showed affiliation with the University of Toronto, however, the University had little if anything to say about the curriculum.

The Farmer's Advocate in 1897 through an editorial on Veterinary Education (19) declared veterinary education must keep pace with the times. The College should establish a matriculatory entrance requirement, extend the period of study to four years and have degrees granted through the provincial university. In 1899 an O.V.C. graduate in Chicago wrote to the Farmer's Advocate, regretting that young men had to leave Canada to obtain an up-to-date education. The Farmer's Advocate also drew attention in 1901 to the fact that the Canadian government would only accept as candidates for examinations for meat inspectors those who were graduates of a school with a three year
program. In 1897 McEachran had instituted examinations prior to employment as veterinary inspector because he believed the Ontario college graduates were not capable of tuberculin testing.

In 1902, the annual meeting of the Ontario Veterinary Association heard a hard hitting address from President J. H. Tennent. Its theme was raising O.V.C. entrance standards to junior matriculation and making the course three years. Tennent suggested it was too much to expect Professor Smith to carry the expense of these changes; an association committee should confer with Smith and every member should support Smith—financially and otherwise. Rutherford who was now in Ottawa directing the activities of the veterinarians hired by McEachran was too busy reorganizing their activities and serving as a vice-president of the A.V.M.A. to actively participate in Tennent's proposals, however, he was at the meeting when they were put forward. The American Veterinary Medical Association about 1892 had resolved that future applicants for membership would have to show graduation from a three year program. About 1897 the United States Bureau of Animal Industry had established the same condition for employment as a veterinary inspector. Thus when the A.V.M.A. came to Ottawa in 1903 for its annual convention, Rutherford who was chairman of the Canadian committee responsible for local arrangements had the stage set with a captive audience of O.V.C. graduates from at home and across the border. Rutherford on the second day of the meeting was chairman of a veterinary education meeting attended by over sixty graduates who tried to decide what the profession should do regarding education. Some may have been particularly disheartened because the McGill faculty had just closed. Professor Smith was present to hear a resolution approved which requested four changes at his College: matriculation examination for entrance; representation from the profession on the examining board; extending the course to three terms of six months each and two six month terms of preceptorship under a qualified veterinarian. Smith responded by referring to the difficulty in financing and competing with North American colleges that did not live up to their professed standards. Obviously Smith was reluctant to make any major change in his college.

The Ontario Association annual meeting of December 23, 1903, praised Rutherford for his running of the A.V.M.A. meeting. President Tennent dwelt on advancing the standards of the profession and Rutherford responded with a speech on education. Of great significance at this meeting was the resolution to form a committee to try to obtain a better veterinary act and to raise the standard of education. Eight members were appointed including Rutherford and Smith. The establishment of this committee marked the beginning of the end of Smith's control over the curriculum in his college. The committee set out in 1904 to raise money to fight for a better veterinary act and it was fairly successful. Rutherford was treasurer for what became the Veterinary Organization Fund. Three meetings were held in 1904, mostly concerned with legislation. Two more members were added in early 1905. The fourth meeting in March 1905 could not be attended by Rutherford. An amicable discussion took place on raising the standards of education and lengthening the term of study at O.V.C., in which Andrew Smith was a participant. It was resolved to meet the Ontario Minister of Agriculture after the first session of Parliament. A meeting was finally arranged with the Minister for 2:00 p.m. on November 8, 1905. That morning the Veterinary Organization Committee met and discussed what would be presented to the Minister. Present was D. King Smith, son of Andrew and a shareholder in the College. Rutherford, although not chairman, controlled the meeting and drew up the address (agreed to by the committee) to be presented to the Hon. Nelson Monteith. This address was as follows:

Sir:

We desire respectfully to bring to your notice, the following resolutions which were unanimously passed at a meeting, held this day, of the Special Organization Committee of the Ontario Veterinary Association.

Resolved

1) That this committee is of the opinion that in view of the large live stock interests of Ontario— not to speak of the rest of the Dominion, and of the importance to stock owners of the maintenance from the Veterinary profession of a standard of education, equally high in proportions, as that demanded from the other branches of learning in this Province the time has now arrived for the Provincial Government to take control of Veterinary education, and to assure at least part of the expenditure required to put it on a satisfactory basis.

2) That this committee would therefore respectfully recommend to the Provincial Govern-
3) That the work of establishing and maintaining the Ontario Veterinary College (an institution which has been of the greatest benefit to the live stock interests, not only of Ontario, but of the whole North American continent) having been hitherto carried on by the sole efforts and at the expense of one individual Professor Andrew Smith. This committee is of opinion that in the making of any new arrangements that gentleman's interests should be carefully considered and would suggest that he should be appointed Dean of the above proposed Faculty of Comparative Medicine – and further that the premises occupied by him at the Ontario Veterinary College should be utilized by the University in the teaching of Comparative Medicine.

4) That in the event of the suggestions contained in the foregoing clauses meeting with the approval of the members of the Provincial Government this committee would be willing as representing the Veterinary Surgeons of Ontario, to render any required assistance in arranging details, and especially in outlining the work of the proposed new Faculty as regards matriculation, curriculum and final examination.

5) That in order to put the recommendations outlined above into effect it will be necessary to place the whole matter of Veterinary education in Ontario under legislative control and to that end this committee would respectfully suggest the introduction by the Government of a measure providing for the maintenance of a standard of Veterinary education in accordance herewith – re the preparation of this measure also this committee would be willing to assist.

Signed by Chas Elliott, Chairman; W. Lawson, J. F. Quinn, J. H. Tennent, J. G. Rutherford, C. Heath Sweetapple, Secretary, Ontario Veterinary Organization Committee.

Andrew Smith did not sign the address either because he did not concur or because his interests could lead to a suggestion of conflict of interest (14).

The Hon. Mr. Monteith gave the committee courteous attention and promised to give earnest consideration. The annual meeting in December was told of the committee's presentation to the Minister and everything was left in his hands. In December 1906, Rutherford and Andrew Smith spoke to the annual meeting on the action of the Organizing Committee and the results. Rutherford was thanked by the members for the stand he had taken in endeavouring to elevate the profession in the Dominion.

What were the results Andrew Smith had referred to at the annual meeting? What had undoubtedly produced these results? Fortunately, for the profession the Royal Commission of Inquiry concerning the governing of the University of Toronto was in session in early 1906. Rutherford at this time was in a near state of exhaustion resultant from his efforts to set up the newly formed Health of Animals Branch of the Department of Agriculture. He had obtained a leave of absence to go to the southern United States for a rest but he delayed the trip to meet the Commission and explain to them the status of veterinary education in Ontario and Canada. In a three hour session he presented the facts in detail to men who were well acquainted with his abilities and respected his opinions. When the Commission reported to the government in April 1906 the changes which Rutherford had fought to obtain were virtually assured by the report (26). The taking over of the College by the government would be done as soon as terms could be arranged with Andrew Smith. What had produced these results? There is little doubt that Rutherford related to the Commission his accumulated evidence of the shortcoming in the training of veterinarians in Canada, evidence which had been collected from the days of his college courses and eventually through appraisal of the graduates who were placed under his supervision in 1902. Furthermore, through extensive trips in the United States and meetings he was constantly able to make comparisons. The agricultural press also supported his stand. Finally perhaps even Andrew Smith realized at age 73 it was time to concede to the wishes of the majority. In February 1906, the Manitoba Association sent a resolution to the Organization Committee in support of Rutherford's proposals of November 1905. It was time for Smith to come to terms with reality.

The annual announcement in 1906–07 of the course change in 1907 gave warning of the approaching three year course for students entering in or after October 1, 1907. Students entering in 1906 were enrolled in the two years course. During 1907 the University of Toronto and the provincial government nego-
tiated with Smith so that in the spring of 1908 Smith completed arrangements which surrendered the control of his College to the Minister of Agriculture for Ontario (27). Educational standards were changed with the appointment of E.A.A. Grange V.S. (Ont.) M.S. as principal. The class of '08 was the last of the two year graduates.

While Smith was negotiating with the Ontario government the Manitoba Association continued to keep the standards issue alive in western Canada. In February 1908 the association appointed a Committee on Education to examine veterinary education as it affected Manitoba and to make a report to the Board of University Commissions of Manitoba. This committee was formed in response to a letter from the commissioners. At the same time a motion was carried indicating the association believed it was time for the government of Manitoba to establish a veterinary college (32). The sponsor of this motion was Fred Torrance, secretary-treasurer, within four years to become successor to Rutherford in Ottawa. During this 1906-07 period the profession in Ontario was not very impressed by the actions of the provincial government in the passing of private acts creating veterinary surgeons out of farriers who had petitioned for recognition as such (23). Rutherford more than other members of the profession realized that a precedent had been set which did not elevate the educational standards and might affect the course of events in progress. His organizational efforts within the profession in Ontario successfully resulted in the defeat of a similar petition in 1908. No further attempts of this nature were made in Ontario, although a somewhat similar case occurred in Manitoba in 1913, the applicant becoming a person authorized to practise by a provincial act (33).

Rutherford expected that Andrew Smith's retirement in 1908 would result in extensive changes at the Ontario Veterinary College with a new principal, government ownership and University of Toronto affiliation in a more meaningful way. For nearly five years he watched from his Ottawa office and then from Calgary, Alberta where in 1912 after separating from the federal government he was employed by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company as superintendent of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry in the Department of Natural Resources. In 1901 he was awarded the C.M.G., the first and only veterinary surgeon in Canada to be so honored (3), an award for his work within the Department of Agriculture. Probably his work to raise the status of the profession was also considered by those who nominated him for the award. By the time he left for Calgary he was aware of the shortcomings of the new principal and the revised curriculum. As a five times vice-president of the A.V.M.A. and then president in 1908-09 he had worked to obtain acceptance of O.V.C. graduates for membership in the face of contrary opinions. By 1913 the quality of instruction and the curriculum at the O.V.C. had not improved to the level required by the A.V.M.A. for being listed as an accredited college. There had been changes in admission requirements in 1908 but these were not as restrictive as might have been expected. Students had to produce evidence of an education equivalent to that required for admission to a High School or else pass an examination in the following subjects: Reading, Spelling, Composition, Writing from Dictation, Letter Writing, Arithmetic and Geography of Canada and the United States. Students who failed these examinations could proceed in the first year of the three year course, but had to pass the entrance examinations before entering the second year.

In addition to the students entering the College for the first time, the College Calendar included notice that former graduates who wished to enter for a third term could do so by paying half fees. The calendar also stated "Graduates of the Ontario Veterinary College in good standing may enter our senior or third year class, the teachings of which will embrace a number of subjects which have hitherto been unavoidably crowded out of a two year course." Two other groups of persons were also eligible for admission — "students or alumni of other colleges who may desire a course in the new senior year." These applicants had to pay full fee and prove their credentials were of a standard equivalent to that which brought the course up to the beginning of the third year. Certain graduates of Agricultural Colleges were eligible for admission to the second year.

These admission standards brought in a small graduating class for 1909 which would ordinarily not have occurred with a change to a lengthened curriculum. The A.V.M.A. did not recognize these diplomas and those who applied for A.V.M.A. membership were refused. Rutherford could not obtain membership for them.

The provincial government took on the granting of a degree — Veterinary Surgeon — when it approved "The Veterinary College Act" in 1909, assuming control of the College. In section 7 of the Act relating to rights and
standing of graduates, part of the section states “and there shall be issued to every such student (i.e. having passed the examinations) a diploma granting him the title, degree and standing of Veterinary Surgeon, such diploma to be attested by the signature of the Principal of the College and the Minister of Agriculture.” Section 11 of the Act referred to affiliation with the University of Toronto, continuing this but only to the extent of enabling the students to obtain at the examinations of the University such rewards, honors, standing, scholarships, diplomas and degrees in Veterinary Science as the University was allowed to confer. In 1909 the University passed a statute prescribing a curriculum in Veterinary Science (B.V.Sc.) and a four year course leading to the degree Doctor of Veterinary Science (D.V.Sc.). The B.V.Sc. course required higher admission standards than those demanded by the Ontario Veterinary College (22). Thus there was the awarding of a V.S. diploma or degree by the College under authority of the College Act and the option of receiving a B.V.Sc. degree from the University of Toronto. The B.V.Sc. degree requirements excluded many students; most refused to upgrade their admission standards even when the opportunity was provided by the University. The College calendar for 1909–10 lists the O.V.C. graduates since 1866, over 3000. The number admitted was not decreased with the departure of Andrew Smith.

The third Annual Congress of the Canadian Public Health Association in Regina during September 1913 was attended by veterinary delegates from most of the provincial associations who were there for two main reasons – to discuss a Dominion veterinary association and the standards at O.V.C. (33). In addition to the delegates, Rutherford and Torrance were present. Educational standards in Canada were discussed at length. A deplorable state was said to exist at the O.V.C., and in the Laval School the conditions were more appalling. Admission requirements were objectionable at O.V.C. as well as the two degree system. The B.V.Sc. course with its matriculation examination was considered reasonable. Then there was the question of the A.V.M.A. refusing O.V.C. graduates. The meeting agreed that each provincial association should send a delegate to the annual meeting of the Ontario Association in February 1914 with the object of discovering the cause of the low standards and taking steps to improve conditions. It was suggested that associations in Western Canada refuse to accept for licensing those having the V.S. degree unless the curriculum was brought up to the proper standards. If the college authorities (Grange) could not assure this, the delegation would then present the fact to him that failure to speedily remedy the situation could lead to steps toward the establishment of veterinary colleges elsewhere in Canada.

Rutherford believed this to be the most effective course to be pursued.

The 1914 annual meeting of the Ontario association was held in Toronto in February, attended by delegates as proposed at the Regina meeting. Principal Grange did not attend because of illness. His refusal to allow the A.V.M.A. inspection team to examine the college in 1913 was discussed together with every other item concerning the educational training provided at the college. Rutherford followed Fred Torrance with a long speech in which he referred to the unfortunate state of affairs under Grange. He felt that an Advisory Board should be set up at once to assist the Minister of Agriculture in administration9 of the College, with a Board representative of the profession and not selected by the government. This of course was provided for in the Veterinary College Act but never utilized. Other delegates voiced similar and supplemental views to those discussed in Regina. Martin from Manitoba presented four prepared resolutions for presentation to the Minister of Agriculture by the delegates. It seems that the provincial delegates were prepared for an absence of Grange and therefore proceeded with the plan to deal directly with the Minister. In brief the resolutions covered recommendations to change the course and examinations at O.V.C. so that the college conformed with other colleges of North America; that everything be done to restore O.V.C graduates to membership in the A.V.M.A.; that an Advisory Board be appointed and that the London Correspondence School be closed (15). Copies of these resolutions were to be sent to Grange.

The delegates and O.V.A. executive members presented the resolutions to the Minister who promised to give them his favourable considerations.

Very little activity on the part of Grange or the Minister resulted from this provincial association pressure. Grange changed only the entry standard to an equivalent of admittance to the 3rd year of a High School or an En-

9The College was in reality a part of the provincial Department of Agriculture. Grange was directly responsible to the Minister and reported to him annually. College finances were provided through governmental votes.
entrance Examination. The University however established in 1914 a course of four years study for the B.V.Sc. so that students entering the O.V.C. in the 1914–15 year came under the new course. Junior matriculation requirements were not changed. Those who were in the three year program were permitted to continue under prior requirements for the degree. In 1915 applicants for admission were required to present a diploma from a recognized College, Normal or a High School – otherwise an Entrance Examination which could be taken at specified places in Canada. This admission requirement applied in 1916 and 1917. In the latter year the course was lengthened to four years. What prompted this change is not known. Rutherford attended the annual meeting of the Manitoba Association in March 1917 at which a committee was appointed to take up the question of the standing of the College but whether this committee affected the lengthening decision is not known. Obviously, the profession in Manitoba was evaluating graduates as they came through the examination process for membership. Examination for membership was not required by the Ontario Association. A graduation diploma from the College was acceptable in Ontario. Whether the diploma entitled the person to place after his name V.S., B.V.Sc., or V.S., B.V.Sc., did not come into consideration. Each designation made little difference to the public who frequently did not differentiate the qualified from the empiric and referred to each as “horse doctor”. The number of B.V.Sc. graduates each year was small: 1909–10; 1910–66; 1911–51 (less than 50% of class); 1912–18 (less than 20%); 1913–10 (less than 12%); 1914–9 (less than 14%); 1915–11 (less than 14%); 1916–9 (less than 9%); 1917–8 (less than 16%).

Grange as Principal had to accept responsibility for the changes and lack of changes at the College. While some of the criticism may have been due to his beliefs on how veterinary surgeons should be educated as undergraduates, criticism should also have been perhaps directed at the government of Ontario for not establishing the authorized advisory board. Grange was successful in having a new College (built at 110 University Avenue) opened in the fall of 1914, constructed with money from the provincial government and a small federal government grant (9). This grant caused Grange’s critics to raise the question of what standards should apply in a veterinary college to warrant a grant. The Manitoba Association and the Central Canada Association wanted an answer from the federal government on this question. They implied that the O.V.C. was not up to the standard warranting a grant. Grange ignored their comments. In addition to the new building Grange improved the O.V.C. by introducing several new subjects that had been lacking for several years and concomitantly increased the number of faculty. Several of the faculty upgraded their qualifications by obtaining the B.V.Sc. degree. Yet not as many graduates were passing the Dominion government examinations for appointment as meat inspectors as Veterinary Director General Torrance had anticipated and by 1918 there was no doubt in Ottawa that the majority of the graduates applying for government employment were inadequately educated.

The V.S. degree course since 1908 was not producing graduates who impressed the board of examiners in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta or British Columbia. In 1917 the annual meeting of the Manitoba association appointed a committee to take up the question of the standing of the Ontario Veterinary College – the Committee on Veterinary Education. Rutherford attended this meeting and it is most likely that he and C. D. McGilvray, secretary-treasurer of the association were responsible for its appointment. The minutes of the meeting do not state who proposed the committee. McGilvray was a member and at the association’s 1918 meeting reported for the committee. Prior to this he had reported no new members were registered in 1917 – one candidate took the examinations and failed. It is worth noting that C. D. McGilvray was equal in brilliance to Rutherford whom he greatly admired, an admiration which may have started when McGilvray lived in Carman, Manitoba, near Portage La Prairie before graduating from the Ontario College. In 1901 he registered in Manitoba and soon became a federal employee, in charge of the Winnipeg office of the Health of Animals, assigned by Rutherford the duty of eradicating glanders in Manitoba which he succeeded in doing. As a member of the Manitoba examining board almost continuously from 1908 to 1918, as president in 1908–09 and secretary-treasurer in 1917–18, he had first hand knowledge of the educational backgrounds of all the applicants for registration. Most likely he provided the leadership which kept alive the educational controversy in Manitoba and supported Rutherford’s endeavours.

In 1918 as a result of the work of the 1917 Committee on Veterinary Education McGilvray prepared and presented to the annual meeting in February seven recommendations which led to a veterinary conference in Ottawa.
in May, attended by provincial association representatives from across Canada, chiefly presidents of the associations (34). The meeting was held at the call of the federal Minister of Agriculture in the Veterinary Director General's office. Each representative gave his views on veterinary education, in theory presenting provincial viewpoints. For two days the meeting delved fully into the Manitoba recommendations. McGilvray presented the most convincing argument for changes and suggested several improvements which should be made in the Ontario curriculum. He fairly presented the fact that Ontario graduates were not the only group failing the Manitoba examinations. The conference listened to the comment from two representatives regarding the competency of the principal. Finally, the conference passed several resolutions for the chairman, Torrance, to transmit to the Minister. Briefly, these were referable to compulsory provincial registration of veterinarians; the immediate establishment of an official Canadian Advisory Board on Veterinary Education; aid to returned soldiers permitting the study of veterinary medicine; matriculation examinations conducted by nonfaculty and federal grants to be used to support better clinical instruction at the colleges; scholarships to encourage agricultural college students to obtain a veterinary education, federal money to be set aside for this; and finally provincial governments were urged to provide scholarships by open competition in agricultural colleges to enable students to obtain a Canadian veterinary education.

It was undoubtedly McGilvray's forthright presentation at the Conference which led to federal and provincial government consultation on the future of the Ontario Veterinary College some time in June or July 1918. On August 28, 1918 McGilvray was given a farewell party in Winnipeg prior to taking up his appointment as Principal of the Ontario Veterinary College. Grange retired with the status of Principal Emeritus. Within a year McGilvray had achieved some of the changes proposed at the Conference. The Veterinary College Act was revised so that the B.V.Sc. degree could be granted to those who passed the college examinations if they had registered after 1916 and taken four academic years. Matriculation requirements were stiffened and a fourth year course schedule announced. Eight students received the B.V.Sc. degree in June 1919. Rutherford's continuous efforts to raise educational standards were finally coming to fruition through McGilvray. The veterinary conference in Ottawa had produced the desired results. Rutherford moved to Ottawa in 1919 on being appointed to the Board of Railway Commissioners.

In 1920 the entrance requirement for the College was a Normal Entrance or Junior Matriculation Certificate of Ontario which meant completion of a high school course of four years. Equivalent standards were also acceptable. Five persons received the B.V.Sc. degree, each having graduated between the period 1900–1920. At a special convocation on Thursday, June 3, 1920, the University of Toronto conferred the degree Doctor of Veterinary Science (Honoris Causa) upon John Gunion Rutherford, V.S., C.M.G., in recognition of his valuable services to the livestock industry of Canada. The College was now under the Department of Agriculture of the Province of Ontario and affiliated with the University of Toronto with a Principal who was determined to graduate students with a training that would no longer be subject to the adverse criticism of provincial or state examining boards. Rutherford must have been one of the most satisfied men in all of Canada as he received the honorary degree.

In conclusion, the question remaining unanswered is – who was right in the McEachran-Smith controversy of 1877? To answer this question an extensive review of education in Canada and at least in Ontario would be required. While we know the outcome of the controversy we still do not have the answer to the question. For those who may be interested in searching for an answer a starting point may be the book Canadian Education: A History (29).

**Summary**

This sixth biennial John C. Rutherford Lecture provides in great detail the continuing effort of John Gunion Rutherford to raise the standard of veterinary education in Canada through professional pressure (mainly the Veterinary Association of Manitoba). Brief reference is made to educational standards in the French schools of Quebec and particular reference is made to the high standards of veterinary education in the veterinary faculty of the Montreal Veterinary College, later part of McGill University. Rutherford persisted during a period of nearly 30 years in advocating better training of veterinary students in Canada, culminating in 1920 with the introduction in Ontario of entrance requirements for the Ontario Veterinary College equivalent to those in the other professions.
Résumé

Cette sixième causerie annuelle dédiée à John G. Rutherford met en lumière les efforts continus qu'il déploya en vue d'améliorer les standards de l'éducation vétérinaire, au Canada, en exerçant une certaine pression auprès de ses collègues, surtout ceux de l'association vétérinaire du Manitoba. L'auteur rappelle brièvement les standards d'éducation qui prévalaient dans les écoles vétérinaires du Québec et il mentionne de façon particulière les hauts standards d'éducation du collège vétérinaire de Montréal, lequel devint plus tard une faculté de l'université McGill. Durant près de 30 ans, John G. Rutherford insistait sur la nécessité d'une meilleure formation des étudiants vétérinaires, au Canada. Il vit ses efforts couronnés de succès lorsque, en 1920, le collège vétérinaire de l'Ontario adopta des exigences équivalentes à celles des autres professions, relativement aux critères d'admission des candidats à l'étude de la médecine vétérinaire.

Références

9. Grange received a grant from the Dominion Government following the passage of the Agricultural Instruction Act of 1912. He announced in February 1913 at the annual meeting of the O.V.A. that a sum of money had been allocated to the College.
30. Winnipeg. The Veterinary Association of Manitoba. Minutes of the organizational meeting, December 17, 1889.