

by W. N. Wildman

Many years ago only a few large survey firms performed all the survey work and it was the practise for each firm to provide its services fairly exclusively in a certain geographical area, each firm respecting the others' "rights" in its area. The results of this was that,

- (1) Field notes, which were the only record of the basis of surveys (as plans did not usually show evidence used and in any case were not usually recorded in the Registry Office) were kept by the relevant survey firm for his area.
- (2) Any survey firm performing a survey in an area other than his normal one knew where to go to get informative field notes or if he did not know, there were so few firms that he could soon find out.
- (3) Due to lack of competition, progress normally evolved through private enterprise was at a minimum.

Now, with the great number of survey firms and government agency survey departments performing surveys, this old system still in existence, causes incredible hardship on surveyors and on the public because,

- (1) In order to give the public the quality of service necessary for its protection any survey firm, young or old, must get "all the evidence existing", which in this system is impossible; thus a surveyor is never sure when he has finished the job, that other evidence will not come to light to upset his survey. Of course the more we hunt the more sure we are of having all the information.
- (2) The system of contacting every survey firm who may have done work in the relevant area is extremely time consuming, costly, impossible, but necessary. The surveyor must pass these resultant costs on to his client as they are incurred in order to protect his client's interests. Thus the public suffers.
- (3) The most important factors of a survey to a client are correctitude, accuracy, cost and time; all except accuracy are adversely affected by this system so the public suffers again.
- (4) Some surveyors charge for the time used in supplying survey information to other surveyors - which is quite reasonable - their time is valuable and they are obliged by law and the nature of the system to supply the information, or the system would fail completely. A few survey firms charge not only for their time but for the information as if it were merchandise which is definitely unreasonable; because not only is a surveyor obliged to give information but he is also obliged by law and the nature of the system to acquire all available information. Besides, the firm with the information has already been paid for the work represented by the field note information and if he has not, it is certainly not the fault of the other surveyor or his client. This also adds to the cost - to the detriment of the public.

So - what is the best solution to this problem, a legacy which our predecessors have left us?



- (1) Immediately, a comprehensive index of all existing survey information (field notes and plans) and its whereabouts be made in all densely populated regions of Ontario, and kept available to all practising surveyors. This index to be kept up to date continuously. This will have the effect that the time and cost involved in tracking down information will be reduced by about 95% and will vastly increase the availability of survey information and will facilitate the next step.
- (2) The Registry Act be amended to provide that it be mandatory that all existing plans of survey be filed and abstracted in the same system (but in separate abstract books) as the normal instruments are recorded and that for all surveys made thereafter the plan of survey showing all evidence used be filed and recorded as an instrument along with all other instruments in the normal system, and that the same idea be applied to Land Titles Offices in so far as it is necessary to obtain equivalent results. At this time the index in (1) above can be used in the setting up of (2) and the index system can then be disposed of as it will have served its vital interim (and initiatory) function.

Thus the surveyor will find all documentary evidence in one place for one Registry area and as it is necessary in any case to conduct a Registry or Land Titles Office search, he will be able to gather all his documentary data at one time and place, and will thus decrease costs to the public by a tremendous amount without detracting from his own income and will be able to provide a much more adequate service as well.

The savings to the public of Ontario by the introduction of this system is estimated to be about one million dollars per year as well as the benefits accrued from a higher quality of service. On the average the 550 (more or less) surveyors would each save 1 hour per day - value to public saved - \$75.0 per day each, i. e. \$4,125.00 per day; i. e. \$20,625.00 per week; i. e. \$1,072,500.00 per year. The adverse results of the present system are increasing so rapidly that the system will be forced to change within twenty years and by that time the transition will be incalculably more difficult than if it were done now. In any case, the system above described will be necessary when the co-ordinate system of surveying is adopted in Ontario.

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#### POSITION AVAILABLE

Ontario Land Surveyor required by a small progressive surveying firm in Western Ontario. This is an opportunity for permanent employment for someone who is congenial and capable of assuming responsibility and has had at least 2 years' experience and is supplemented by the usual fringe benefits. The work will consist of both rural and urban property surveys, topographic and engineering surveys, and layout for municipal services such as sewers, watermains, roads, etc.

For details apply to H. H. Todgham, O.L.S., P.O. Box 386, Chatham, Ontario (phone EL 4-0400) or contact the Executive Professional Division through your nearest National Employment Office and quote Windsor Clearance Order No. E.P. - C - 115, Occ. Code 0-6410.

All enquiries will be treated in strict confidence.