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India honours Joe Hulse

Only two Canadians – both of whom played an important role in IDRC's evolution – have ever received the Padma Shri Award, one of the highest civilian honours conferred by the Government of India.

Flora MacDonald, who was Joe Clark's External Affairs Minister and later chair of IDRC's board of governors from 1992-97, received the honour in June 2004. And this May, in an impressive ceremony in Delhi, the President of India, Shrimati Pratibha Patil, conferred the award – equivalent to a British knighthood – on Joseph Hulse, who from 1970-87 was director of the former Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Sciences (AFNS) division, and subsequently Executive Vice-President at the Centre.

During those years Joe Hulse supervised the support that IDRC gave to some 800 projects in 75 developing countries. But his most long-lasting work has been in India, which he first visited in 1962 when he was asked by then FAO director-general, Dr B.R. Sen to help establish an international Food Technology Training and Research Centre in Mysore, during a period of food crisis in India. He was at the time research director at Maple Leaf Mills Ltd., Canada's largest agribusiness, and he persuaded the CEOs of Canada's largest agribusiness companies and major banks to raise considerable funds for the Canada-Mysore Project.

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Hulse receives the Padma Shri Award from Indian President Shrimati Pratibha Patil at a ceremony in Delhi.

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From the Board...

Summer Greetings from Ottawa.

First, a quick reminder that the 2008 Annual General Meeting and Reception of members will take place in Ottawa on Friday, 31 October, at the Head Office of IDRC. The Board will provide the necessary Halloween Pumpkins and ghouls.

IDRC is now well settled into its new offices. The address is 150 Kent Street (Between Slater and Albert Streets), and the meeting is on the 8th (Conference) floor in the W. David Hopper Suite. The timings are 3:30 - 5:00 p.m. for the joint IDRC seminar in the Lester Pearson Boardroom, followed by the AGM and Reception in the Hopper suite adjacent. In accordance with our tradition (and your many requests) the business portion of the meeting will be approximately five minutes in duration.

For those of you who may wish to point out, correctly, that we have already had an AGM and Reception this year – in January 2008 – I would remind you that meeting was the AGM for 2007, delayed because of IDRC's move from their former Head Office premises on Albert Street.

We have worked closely with the IDRC's Middle East Regional Office (MERO), our IDRC counterpart Division for this year, and that has resulted in the thematic material prepared for the October meeting seminar.

In keeping with the MERO theme for this year's meeting, the seminar topic will be the IDRC partnership with Foreign Affairs-Canada and CIDA for the development and management of advisory services to support Canada's role in the Multilateral Peace Process initiative launched in 1992 to complement international efforts to inaugurate direct peace talks among Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the Palestinians.

Canada's particular challenge to prepare parties for final negotiations on the critical issue of Palestinian refugees has underscored IDRC's value in the process as an independent source of knowledge and expertise. If you are able to attend the seminar we believe it will prove interesting and stimulating.

Chris Smart will chair the meeting, and Tim Dottridge, Director of Special Initiatives for IDRC, with Roula El-Rifar, Senior Program Specialist, will introduce the issues.

An article on page 4 of this issue of the Newsletter provides some additional detail on the seminar topic. We look forward to seeing you in October.

James Pfeifer - Chairman

Your Board:

Chris Smart (Secretary),
 Gerry Bourrier (Treasurer),
 Maria Williams (Director-Memberships),
 Bob Stanley (Editor-Newsletter),
 Claude-Paul Boivin (Special Programs),
 Angie Anton (Director and Special Meetings),
 Jean-Marc Fleury (Director and Special Projects),
 IDRC Staff Representative: Kim Daley

“It is widely evident that affluent nations are more disposed to satisfy the appetites of their automobiles than to provide adequate food for poor people.”

Joe Hulse

Joe Hulse honoured

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Since 1964 the Mysore Centre has trained more than 8,000 M.Sc. students from 49 developing nations to work in food industries. For the past 16 years Hulse has been Visiting Professor at the Central Food Technological Research Institute in Mysore and the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation in Tamil Nadu, and has inspired a cooperative program that brings together several Indian NGOs, industries and the Mysore institute to alleviate chronic malnutrition among poor rural children.

In 2006 Hulse was elected Fellow for Life of India’s National Academy of Sciences. He also remains the only non-Indian to have received the Conservation of the Environment Award presented by the Rotary Clubs and the Earthcare Society of India.

It was on his 68th visit to India that he received the Padma Shri Award at Rashtrapati Bhavan, the President’s Palace on May 5. Also in attendance were the Indian Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, and the Congress leader Sonia Gandhi, who both came forward to congratulate him. The Canadian High Commissioner to India, David Malone (who had just become president-elect of IDRC) said: “We are very pleased to see such a prestigious award being conferred on a man whose illustrious career has been one devoted to mankind.”

No doubt he will have looked back with satisfaction to the 1960s, when the training centre was set up in a palace given for this purpose by the Maharajah of Mysore, who rewarded Hulse’s services with the gift of a baby elephant called Indira. The elephant was flown to Canada at the Maharajah’s expense, and Hulse found a home for her in a zoo on the shores of the Georgian Bay in Ontario.

An attack on biofuels

India (and Indira) have moved on in those 45 years, and Joe Hulse has become a world-renowned expert on industrial biotechnology; and for the past eight years he has been a Visiting Professor of Industrial Biotechnologies at the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology in the U.K. This year he delivered a lecture in Bolton, England, entitled “Biotechnologies Serving Humanity” in which he nevertheless attacked the growth of biofuels:

“It is widely evident that affluent nations are more disposed to satisfy the appetites of their automobiles than to provide adequate food for poor people,” he said, pointing out that “one-third of all maize grown in the United States is for conversion to ethanol. The weight of maize to produce the volume of ethanol to fill the tank of a typical American automobile would feed one poor Mexican for a year.”

In his book *Sustainable Development at Risk: Ignoring the past* (Foundation Books/IDRC 2007 ISBN 978-81-7596-521-8 e-ISBN 978-1-55250-368-3) Hulse draws on his life’s work, including service on the Brundtland Commission’s advisory panel on food security. As its title suggests, it carries detailed warnings, but it also has a substantial chapter of “Case Studies of Successful Projects” with a dozen examples, several drawn from India. He praises Indian leaders who from early days encouraged scientific and technological research and rejected the top-down approach of some international institutes. India, he writes, “offers the best hope of exemplary governance, as well as social and economic development.”

Clyde Sanger

A very 'special Initiative' for the Middle East Seminar to precede this year's AGM

In 1992, at the request of DFAIT and with funding from CIDA, IDRC agreed to manage an innovative Expert and Advisory Services Fund (EASF), created to support Canada's role in the Multilateral Peace Process to complement an international effort to inaugurate direct peace talks between Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the Palestinians.

Over the intervening 16 years the project has had its high and low moments navigating the opportunities and setbacks of a modest but innovative line of support to bring a negotiated settlement to the Palestine-Israel conflict. Canada's contribution to prepare parties for final negotiations on the fraught issue of Palestinian refugees, proved particularly challenging. From the outset the EASF project underscored IDRC's value as an independent source of knowledge creation and reflection.

There are stories to be told—war stories of victories, defeats, of lessons distilled from frontline engagement with what is one of the world's critical ongoing contretemps.

Tim Dottridge, Director of the Special Initiatives Division and his colleague Roula El-Rifai, Senior Program Specialist, Middle East Special Initiatives, will lead the Seminar. The seminar will be chaired by Chris Smart, who was Director of Special Initiatives when EASF began, and will run from 3:15 p.m. until 5:00.

"I remember Dean Bentley"

The April IDRC Newsletter also includes an Obituary for Dean Fred Bentley - a gentleman I first met in India: when he was team leader for ascertaining, on behalf of the External Affairs (no CIDA yet) in 1967, where Canada could best contribute in Agriculture (eventually this led to the formation of a dryland research institute - for which, for 15 years, Agriculture Canada - and the Director of our Research Station, here at Lethbridge, was the 'executing agency'.

The Indian HQ for this centre became Hyderabad where within a few years also, the headquarters for ICRISAT was formed (with Bentley as the first Chairman of the Board of that organization). During this process in 1967, one of the team members came to the NARI, a small agricultural research institute, where I was by then working, to meet with me and my boss (Bon Nimbkar), and the handful of CUSO-Aggies were asked to come to Delhi for us to meet with the whole team!

There I met Dean Bentley – and remember a very fascinating discussion with him, concerning my Paniya experience – and he explained the Carkhuff scale of empathy (1 to 5 = highest) to me: identifying me as providing level 5 responses to problem areas among the tribals I observed and related to; while, by contrast, too many in the 'development business' (whether from overseas, in this case Canada, US; or indigenous, in this case India) had much lower ratings according to Bentley!

Hans Henning Mündel

[Mündel's book, *My Life Among the Paniyas of the Nilgri Hills* was reviewed in Alumni Newsletter number 16.]

Read Any Good Trip Reports lately?

The *Trip Report* was the price the Program Officer paid for the privilege of travelling to some of the less-visited places on the planet. Often written last thing at night—from notes that would be barely decipherable within 12 hours of a hurried scribble, converted to something resembling prose—were a mix of business and pleasure, often the only form of ‘after dark’ entertainment on the typical IDRC itinerary.

The typical IDRC Program Officer’s office was the lair of a pack-rat: wall-to-wall paper. How many of those pack-rats have a personal archive — complete with trip reports, saved against the day when he or she could sit down to pen the Great Canadian Development Novel or the last word on ‘Development As Though It Mattered’ to rival the current gurus Easterly and Collier and Sachs?*

This is an invitation to dig into your trip report archive to share a paragraph or two that captured moments of truth and insight on the road for IDRC.

A couple of examples to get the ball rolling:

Ghana circa 1980: “I spend Sunday afternoon at the home of a Ghanaian who had studied in Canada and enjoyed a meal of foofoo, plantain and chicken in pepper and peanut broth. I was to learn later that the meal ... must have been difficult to put together. Local food is available but scarcity and a poor distribution system make any planning of meals difficult. The logistics rather than the expense of preparing a special meal are challenging...for example prepared palm oil is so scarce that housewives are using crude, time consuming methods to extract small amounts of oil from nuts.

And a coping mechanism with lessons for the gas prices in Canada 2008:

“To reach the suburbs of Accra, I was introduced to the rationalized taxi system...a point to point system based on the city’s traffic roundabouts. To make a long journey passengers must walk from one taxi to the next travelling the road they want away from the roundabout. This rationalized system has developed by the taxi companies in response to the cost of fuel and the petrol rationing...”

Chris Smart

* Jeffrey Sachs, “Common Wealth”; William Easterly: “The White Man’s Burden”; Paul Collier: “The Bottom Billion”.

Time for Golf

The IDRC golf committee has decided to return this year to the Kingsway Park Golf and Country Club in Aylmer for the Centre’s annual tournament. Alumni members who are going to be in the area at the end of August are once again invited to participate in this fun event and share a glass or two with old colleagues at dinner after the game. Here are the details:

- ☞ Tournament takes place on Wednesday, August 27 with a split tee start at noon.
- ☞ Location: 1461, Chemin de la Montagne, Gatineau (Secteur Aylmer).
- ☞ Cost: \$72.00, which includes golf, cart and a chicken dinner. That’s \$5 less than last year!

To book your place in the tournament, contact Linda at lmacwillie@idrc.ca or call 613-236-6163, ext.2134 right away.

