REPORT ON STAFF PRIORITIES

by Alan D. Levy,
May 4, 1975

1. At the NEC meeting of March 24, a committee was struck to interview the staff in order to canvass their views about reduction of staff in light of the present financial crisis of CELA. The committee was composed of myself, John Dunn and Alanna Quinn. In my typically undemocratic style, I personally interviewed all staff members from April 1st to the 6th, without consulting with John and Alanna. I then called a meeting of non-staff NEC members on April 10th to get their views and comments on the question. On April 15th, I met with Mahood, Mitchell, Willms and Block and learned that staff members were impatient for some feedback from me, and that led to an informal staff meeting on the afternoon of April 17th at the CELA offices at which time I described my initial reactions, and discussed various related issued with staff members. On May 1st, I met with Mahood and Willms for two hours to clarify our financial position. I then met with Dunn and Quinn to discuss the preparation of this Report.

2. I should say at the outset that I was impressed by the open, critical and sincere approach that all staff adopted in our meetings. Further, I am convinced that we have assembled a devoted hard working, loyal staff that ought to be retained if at all possible.

3. A great deal of pressure on staff members result from (a) low pay (b) lack of job security and (c) inadequate quarters. As a result, the turnover rate is high due to people simply burning-out. This must be avoided. To train and develop a new staff member is a drain on the organization and to lose an important team member is disruptive.

I propose that policy be formulated whereby a small effective staff be selected, and that the size not be increased until the following criteria are met:

(i) salaries approximate those in the market-place;

(ii) sufficient organizational funding to give 6 to 12 months' security to employees;

(iii) adequate offices be secured.

4. The staff in March:

(1)	Heather Mitchell - Counsel	$11,000.
(2)	John Swaigen - Counsel	9,000.
(3)	Gar Mahood - Executive Director	9,000

4. The staff in March: cont'd from page 1

(4)	Sally Leppard - Impact Team	$8,600.
(5)	Dolores Montgomery - Impact Team	8,600
(6)	Elizabeth Block - Newsletter, secretary, etc.	7,000.
(7)	Joe Castrilli - Impact Team, Researcher	7,000
(8)	Linda Cardini - Complaints	7,000.
(9)	Nicki - secretary to legal Team	7,000.
(10)	Marjorie Matthews - Reception, Secretary	7,000.

Ten staff - Total $81,200/year $6,767.00/month

5. <u>Attrition</u>

Changes in composition in staff due to recent developments:

(9) Nicki - employment terminated in March, 1975, due to inadequate performance.

(8) Linda Cardini - Resigned end of April, 1975 for good job elsewhere.

(4) Sally Leppard - hired on 3 month contract, expiring end of April;

(5) Dolores Montgomery - hired on 3 month contract expiring May 15th.

(7) Joe Castrilli - returning to Law School in September. Seeking summer vacation.

The staff at present is 8. Sally Leppard and Dolores Montgomery seek a further one month renewal of contract to complete their impact work. Joe Castrilli is available until end of June, 1975.

6. <u>Staff Role Priorities</u>

This is an impossible task, for several reasons. First, it assumes that an individual is prepared to accept a position requiring the fulfullment of various incongruous duties. Secondly, it is clear that the functions presently undertaken by the organization will suffer, as the size of staff is reduced. In attempting to minimize the suffering at the same time as cutting back staff, one realizes that the mission is futile. Thirdly, to objectively make decisions about staff priorities without considering who these decisions will be sending to the U.I.C. requires a more dispassionate advocate than I. See paragraph #2 above.

The following is my ordering of priorities from one to six. In my view, the dictates of the criteria listed in paragraph 3 above eliminate the need to consider a staff larger than six:

1. Counsel - $11,000. Naturally, as the only employee, the counsel would not be doing much counselling. Fund-raising, P.R., and administration would take most of the time. An answering service and volunteer secretarial assistance would be required.

2. Secretary - $7,000. This is the model of the Canadian Civil Liberties Union, Secretary is receptionist, complaints advisor, typist and you name it.

3. Executive Director - $9,000. Fundraising, administration. Could be a lawyer, in which case the fundraising and administative work could be shared with #1.

4. Complaints advisor/Secretary - $7,000. Primarily the function of Linda Cardini. It is suggested that an impact team member such as Dolores continue on as impact person and make transition into complaints advisor, at end of May. To spend some time throughout May picking up threads from Linda.

5. Secretary - $7,000. Now that a 2nd full time secretary is added, #4 can work full time on complaints. It is suggested that this position be occupied by a 2nd impact team member until that project is completed, providing that half time be devoted to secretarial work in the meantime.

6. Counsel - $9,000. If #3 is a non-lawyer, then #6 becomes second staff lawyer. If #1 and #3 are both lawyers, then the executive director function shifts entirely to #6.

It can readily be seen that a staff as constituted above lacks a legal researcher although I understand that Mr. Castrilli might be seduced into part-time work while at law school.

John Dunn and Alanna Quinn lean toward an optimum staff of five, by cutting out #4 - the complaints advisor.

One might find it curious that a staff of six neatly provides a position for all those presently on staff who intend or want to say on. Query the extent to which I was overcome by point #3 in paragraph #6 above.

Subject to paragraph 7, I recommend a staff of six with a part time legal researcher.

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7. Budgetary Restrictions

The staff of six will cost $50,000 per year, or $4,167 per month. As I understand it, there is the additional $2,000/month overhead, plus $1,500 per month for loan repayment, totalling $7,667 per month.

I recommend that the staff as constituted continue into the month of May, "on spec" in accordance with the Barrett plan.

I recommend that the Impact Team be disbanded no later than May 31st.

I would defer the decision of whether Castrilli remains during June, and whether the June staff be six or less, until we learn of such important events as the Metro grant ($10,000) and Law Foundation ($15,000-$30,000) decisions. The Metro grant should be determined by May 31st.

(a Second Report)

by Alan Levy — CELA FUNDING — May 4, 1975

(a) It does not require a great deal of perception to realize that something went wrong with the financial affairs of CELA. Something went amiss in the fund-raising department which is attributable to many causes:

(1) Fund-raising has always been regarded as an unpleasant word - NEC usually tries to avoid the sound of it. (2) We have also failed to give to it the staff priority required. The organization lives or dies as a result of it, yet it is the only function for which we have no working "team". (3) No ongoing direction or guidance has been given to the Executive Director in a systematic organized fashion.

It was suggested at the non staff NEC meeting of April 10th by T. Barrett that a management committee be struck consisting of Executive Director, Treasurer, staff Counsel. I mentioned the proposal to the staff on April 17th. The idea was well received.

I propose that a Management Committee be approved by NEC and required to meet weekly to review our financial circumstances, fund-raising news, and to make proposals and recommendations concerning the financial administration of the organization.

(b) The responsibility for fund-raising should fall on a team within staff under the leadership of the Executive Director. The team should be examining and exploring ways and means of raising funds and discovering alternative sources and approaches. Example: The impact team developed financing schemes which were unusual, but effective. With a diverse staff of educated and talented people such as we have, I suggest that fundraising "brain-storm" meetings be held periodically to give the fund-raising team new inspiration, ideas, etc.

(c) It has been suggested that we have not yet come to terms with our biggest yet untopped source of money: clients.
Proposal: (not my own idea)

(1) that our offices be moved to storefront location to improve accessibility.

(2) that our lawyers, leave staff, form partnership and rent office services from CELA; they could also be part-time salaried employees of CELA;

(3) any cases that come to such lawyers of an environmental nature will be handled through the partnership account - the partnership pays lawyers' salaries plus "office services" provided to them by CELA.

(4) the lawyers could take some non-enviornmental cases in order to supplement revenues. In fact the firm might include some public-spirited lawyers who would not do environmental cases. Their expertise

would assist the environmental lawyers, and their case load would give the "partnership" a secure base.

(5) There would be no "steering" or "practicing law" by a public organization, and therefore no hassles with the Law Society.

(6) The traditional fund-raising would continue to support other functions, such as research and lobbying.

It is difficult to understand how a group of lawyers trained to think up clever defenses, loop-holes, causes of actions and other schemes for their cleints have been unable to advise two colleagues about how to make an environmental law practice pay for itself.

(a Third report)

by Alan D. Levy

CELA ADMINISTRATION

May 4, 1975

In my interviews with staff, I became concerned about some problems that persist in the organization, which threaten its chances of survival at worst, and impede its efficiency at best.

(1) Paranoia: -

This North American malaise has spread from long-haired freaks into CELA, wherein it is commonly believed by staffers that NEC, non-staffers:

(a) don't like staff
(b) secretly control the organization and determine its destiny e.g. meeting with me on April 10th at Cliff Lax's office.
(c) don't really care about the organization because:
  (i) they won't put their money where their mouths are;
  (ii) they are far too interested in their own jobs.

However, I have learned that non-staff NEC persons view the situation differently:

(a) they don't know the staff;
(b) they don't know what is going on in the organization and have the feeling that staff is comfortably in control with no wish for outside direction or interference;

(c) some of them would like to get more involved, but don't know how.
  (i) most are in debt over their heads themselves;
  (ii) most work the same horrible hours that staff do, if not worse;

(d) some of them feel that it is only the veteran non-staff NEC persons who have any influence, and consequently, have considered resigning because they feel slighted, ignored; one indicated that the April 10th meeting was the first he had been notified of.

Realizing that this will never do, I suggested at the April 10th meeting of non-staff, and the April 17th meeting of staff that a "buddy" system be employed It is used in other public interest groups, and works rather effectively. A staff person is matched with a non-staff person. They meet twice monthly to discuss the job, the running of the office, problems, gossip, etc. It gives the non-staffer insights - it gives the staffer an objective sounding board. It also serves as a crude alarm system, in that concerns and fears which are expressed early may precipitate corrective action early enough to avail serious disruption.

Example: Some staff felt concern over the funding situation weeks or months before the March crunch - but did not take steps, or even communicate the concern at NEC meetings.

(2) Many staffers complain about the lack of job description and classification. Hence, a certain degree of overlap, inefficiency and confusion exists with some staffers not really pulling their share of the load. The question of accountability requires exploration and definition.

(3) The Role of Executive Director requires clarification:

(a) what are the responsibilities of the Executive Director;
(b) Should the role be vested with hierarchical or line authority over the staff? which staff?
(c) what should the relationship of staff lawyer to Executive Director be?
(d) To what extent should Executive Director report to and be accountable to staff? In what forum?

(e) What ought the relationship of Executive Director to NEC be?
(f) To what extent ought the decisions of staff meetings dictate the activities of the Executive Director?
(g) How should the Executive Director resolve conflicts between NEC decisions and staff decisions?