

# Arts vs. Sciences in the money wars

**OTTAWA (CUP)** — The federal government should stop discriminating against research in the social sciences and humanities, recommends an all-party Parliamentary committee.

In a concise report released March 12, the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs recommends that the Mulroney government amend the Income Tax Act so that the social sciences and humanities are no longer excluded in the Act's definition of scientific research and experimen-

tal development.

Further, the committee recommends that private donations to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, made under the federal government's matching grants scheme, be eligible for the same tax credit allowances provided for donations to other research councils.

The recommendations have important ramifications for SSHRC, one of the three federally funded councils that provide financial assistance to university researchers. If

the committee's recommendations are approved, SSHRC has greater chances of meeting government-set goals for private sector donations.

"Obviously we're pleased with this," said SSHRC official Jeffrey Holmes. "We've been working on this for some time, and we're glad to see that they (the committee) see that all councils should be treated equally."

Exclusion in the Income Tax Act has demoralized social scientists, who are convinced corporate sponsorships will be virtually impossible to attract without the allure of lucrative tax credits.

"We are literary people, not scientific. No corporation would be interested in us," said Carleton University French professor Eldon Kaye, currently under contract to SSHRC.

However, Standing Committee Chair Don Blenkarn said committee members identified sufficient areas of research, "especially in the communications industry", to make the recommendations.

"We had many members on the committee who were well aware of the issues," Blenkarn said, noting the lobby by the social science research community was "well-prepared".

"People take chances, play hunches, but always believe that the creative use of intelligence will produce something worthwhile," the committee's report reads. "Broadening the scope of research to include the social sciences and humanities may increase the payoff to research and development."

SSHRC officials say the recommendation is deserved, and may help win more financial support for the social sciences. Statistics obtained from SSHRC indicate that for this academic year, the SSHRC budget of \$70 million accounts for only 12 per cent of the total for the three granting councils. The Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council picked up 58 per cent, while the Medical Research Council was given 30 per cent.

However, the allocations do not coincide with the university populations of the various communities. About 58 per cent of graduate students and faculty in Canada are in the social sciences, while 28 per cent are in the natural sciences and engineering, and 15 per cent are in medical research.

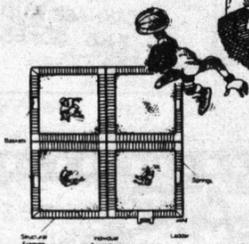
On a per capita basis, then, the social sciences were awarded \$1,496 per person, while the natural sciences and engineering research community received nearly 10 times as much.

The committee's recommendations have been forwarded to Finance Minister Michael Wilson, who announced the matching grants scheme a year ago. Blenkarn said he doesn't know what the government's reaction to the recommendations will be.

"Of course they could sit on it and not do anything," he said, "but generally, recommendations from the committee are looked at pretty carefully."

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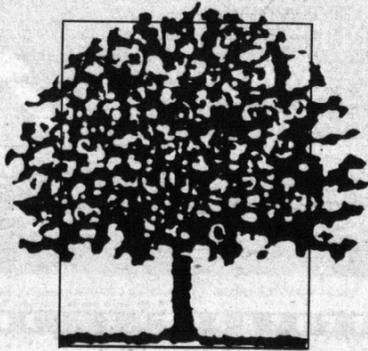
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