



Chairman's message



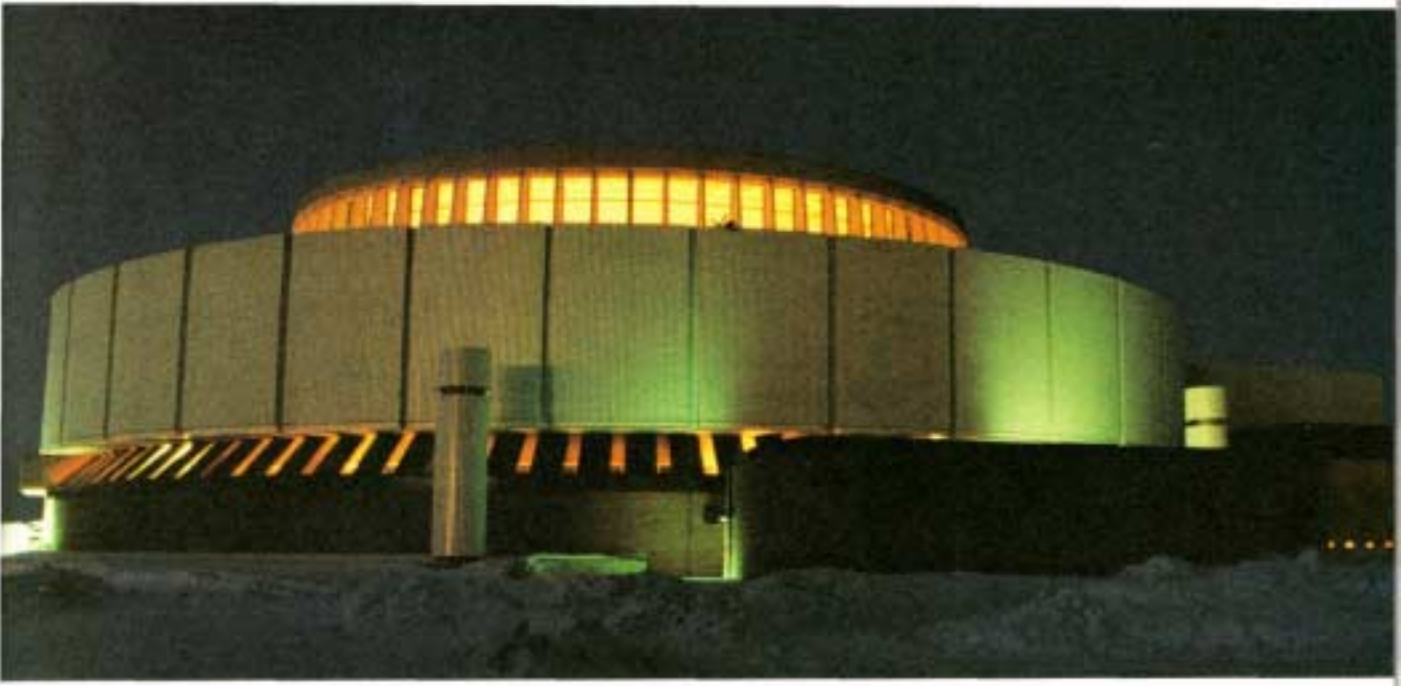
Camille A. Dagenais

"The only thing that is important is the future." I wrote these words in 1966, when SNC was changing from a partnership to an employee-owned company and drawing up its first long range plan. They are no less true today. Once again, The SNC Group is evolving and moving into uncharted territory. I believe management has read the signs right and is taking the paths most likely to lead to opportunities for all in The SNC Group.

In rereading the goals we set 18 years ago, I realized that some are only now being reached. We spoke then of research projects, our own processes, turnkey packages, lease-back contracts and diversification into mining, manufacturing and new industries. We resolved to make full use of computers and other new tools and techniques and to explore new financing media.

This shows how important it is to persevere in the effort to reach our main corporate goals. An enterprise cannot change direction every few years, even though it may be impossible, in the short term, to reach all the objectives it has set. Wisely, I think, management today has judged the eighties as the right time to put into action some of the ideas discussed when The SNC Group first became employee-owned, along with others added to our long range plan in the intervening years.

Many goals established then have been reached. We stressed excellence in project and construction management;



from being Canadian pioneers we have become Canadian leaders and our skill in these techniques is in international demand. We have broadened our range of services to clients and widened our markets to embrace every sector of industry. Geographically we are represented across Canada and around the world.

When we made our first plans for the SNC Group in the mid-sixties, we placed high emphasis on people. "SNC must answer to the aspirations and ambitions of hundreds of employees," we said. "We must give people a fair opportunity to adjust to new ways of work, to progress and to occupy a position of importance. Above all, we must provide a place agreeable to work in, that stimulates and satisfies everyone as much as possible." This policy has remained the keystone of The SNC Group. In management, we know we have not always been perfect, so it was gratifying to see that when Canadian Business last year published an article called 'Great workplaces and how they got that way' ours was one of six companies highlighted. Among spontaneous comments of SNC colleagues, we read: This company has an entirely different relationship with its employees than most big companies. There is a rapport between the different levels of personnel. I've never felt I was merely an employee" and "There's no class structure here."

A happy, informal atmosphere fosters creativity but building it depends

on people at all levels, not just management. Everyone in The SNC Group can claim credit for making it a great place to work.

Looking back at our original goals, I felt great satisfaction that the new wave of management now taking over is upholding the aims and principles that fostered the growth of The SNC Group over the past decades and is today showing verve, imagination and daring in taking steps to achieve new objectives. That some may never be attained doesn't matter. For any enterprise to remain dynamic, its people must always have new heights to scale.

On behalf of the management and staff, I thank Christopher Whitworth for his three years' service on the board of directors, two as a minority shareholders' representative.

At the annual meeting in March we welcomed two new outside directors, William Howard from Calgary and Robert Vachon from Montreal. They have made important contributions throughout 1984 and we look forward to their presence on our board for many years to come.

SNC/Sandwell called on an unusual construction technique to build this dome over the glory hole - pan of its coal handling and storage project for Union Oil's Obed Marsh Mine at Hinton, Alberta. To avoid complicated scaffolding and formwork the contractor inflated a heavy fabric balloon over the glory hole. Reinforcing steel was placed on the surface which was then shotcreted.

Designed for the Montreal Urban Community, this sewage pumping station brought three awards of excellence to The SNC Group in 1984. A giant of its kind, the cylindrical structure plunges 51.8m below ground level.