wolves—a reliable indicator of levels in the bloodstream. In the June issue of *Conservation Biology*, Creel's group reveals that elk in Yellowstone National Park show higher levels of stress hormones during the snowmobile season and that levels rise and fall with the amount of daily snowmobile traffic. Wolves in Voyageurs National Park in Minnesota, where snowmobile use is heavy, show higher hormone levels than those of wolves in nearby Isle Royale National Park in Michigan, which is closed to snowmobiles. During the 2-year study, wolf glucocorticoid levels at Voyageurs dropped 37%, paralleling a 37% drop in snowmobile activity.

Creel says the findings provide an "early warning" that the populations, which have been stable so far, could suffer in the future. Chronically elevated stress hormone levels in vertebrates suppress the immune system, inhibit reproduction, and cause other maladies. But in the absence of population declines, Creel says his team is not out to push recreation from the parks. "We're being careful not to recommend policy to managers; that's their job," he says.

Wildlife ecologist Joshua Millspaugh of the University of Missouri, Columbia, says that it's not clear whether the glucocorticoid levels measured are detrimental to the animals, but that the researchers' noninvasive techniques are informative and might indeed suggest incipient population effects. Samuel Wasser, a conservation biologist at the University of Washington, Seattle, adds that policy-makers should err on the side of caution: "If we wait to show a fitness effect, it may already be too late to turn things around." **–JAY WITHGOTT**

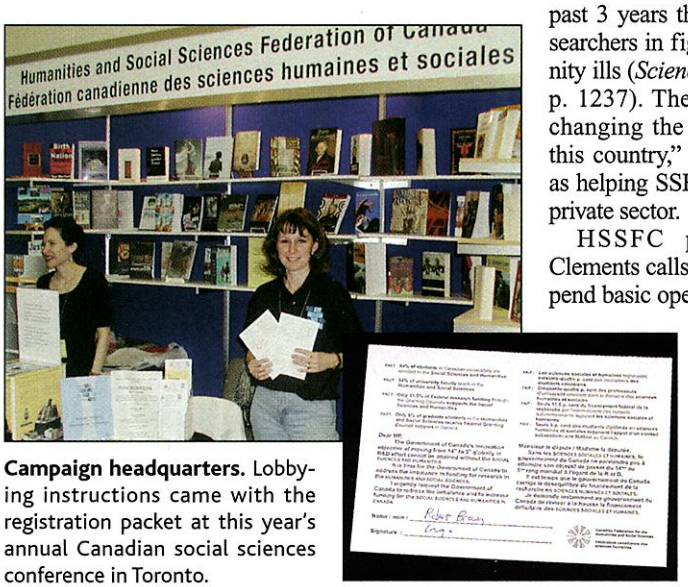
Jay Withgott is a science writer based in San Francisco.

CANADA

Social Scientists Go For a Political Dip

TORONTO—For more than 3 decades, sociologist Ralph Matthews of the University of British Columbia in Vancouver had quietly gone about his academic business, producing five books and over 80 journal articles on such issues as how energy megaprojects affect communities. Negotiating a new contract was as close as he ever came to political activism. But last week, within hours of arriving here for the 71st Congress of the Social Sciences and Humanities, Matthews experienced two "unprecedented" events that have turned him—and thousands of his colleagues—into lobbyists for their profession.

Canada's social scientists have complained for years about getting the short end of the funding stick. They are particularly fond of noting that only 11% of the government's allocation to the country's three funding councils goes to the social sciences, although they represent 54% of all academic researchers. Last week the head of the social sciences council, Marc Renaud, sharpened the rhetoric. He announced that he would be forced to end the council's bread-and-butter awards to individual investigators unless the government came through with substantial funding increases. The threat was designed to get legislators to notice his proposal for more than tripling the council's $92-million-a-year budget. It certainly got Matthews's attention. "It would be close to a tragedy if Standard Research Grants were cut," he says. "They are the intellectual base for curiosity-driven fundamental research."



Campaign headquarters. Lobbying instructions came with the registration packet at this year's annual Canadian social sciences conference in Toronto.

Renaud's threat helped convince Matthews to participate in a novel exercise. His registration packet, assembled by the Humanities and Social Sciences Federation of Canada (HSSFC), which organizes the congress and serves as the national lobbying arm for 90 organizations and their 24,000 members, contained a postcard to be filled in and mailed to Industry Minister Allan Rock and other members of Parliament. Such a campaign might not seem like a big deal in the United States, but it represents a major step for most Canadian scientists. "One of the sad facts about the Canadian scholarly community is that we have tended to let our national representatives do the job for us," says philosopher Andrew Brook of Carleton University in Ottawa. "But this has served as a real wake-up call. I haven't heard of anybody who hesitated a second about signing the postcards."

The $21-million-a-year individual grants program is the largest component of the base budget for the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). It provides researchers $15,000 in seed money for studies that ultimately gestate into books or larger research initiatives. Renaud says an inadequate budget is now forcing him to choose between eliminating those grants or dismantling programs aimed at helping society, such as the 37 science shops established over the past 3 years that enlist university researchers in fighting various community ills (*Science*, 13 November 1998, p. 1237). The latter programs "are changing the nature of research in this country," Renaud notes, as well as helping SSHRC make allies in the private sector.

HSSFC president Patricia Clements calls Renaud's threat to suspend basic operating grants "the most serious and chilling thing that I have ever heard in my lengthy career." And although Renaud says he's invigorated by the community's initial response to his call for political action, he's also aware of the government's propensity to respond to critics by tightening the purse strings. It's a risk he's willing to take. "I'm not directing this against the government," he says. "But if they don't like it, they can fire me." **–WAYNE KONDRO**

Wayne Kondro writes from Ottawa.

RICE SEQUENCE DATA

Syngenta Agrees to Wider Release

TOKYO—In a step anticipated by rice genome researchers, the company that published a draft sequence of the rice genome earlier this year has agreed to a fuller release of its data. On 23 May Syngenta, a Swiss-based agricultural biotechnology giant, announced that it would transfer the assembled sequence together with the underlying data to the publicly funded International Rice Genome Sequencing Project (IRGSP), which is working on its own draft of the rice genome sequence. The Syngenta data will be incorporated into the IRGSP sequence, which will be deposited in public databases.

On 5 April *Science* published a draft of the genome sequence of the *japonica* subspecies of rice that was produced by Syngenta's Torrey Mesa Research Institute in San Diego, California (p. 92). Instead of following the traditional practice of depositing the data in a public database, such as GenBank, the Syngenta group made the sequence available on its own Web site and on a CD-ROM. Researchers could use the raw sequence data in

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