

Science policy and communications

The policy environment for science communications
CSPC, November 20 2013
Paul Dufour, University of Ottawa and PaulicyWorks



Getting past the front door

Science Forum and journalism

- Why we need to think BIG in R&D (1969-April)
- Assessing the utility of basic science- John Polanyi (June 1969)
- Disillusionment with science among the young (Aug 69)
- Magnetic train for urban travel-should it be a national goal? (Feb 70)
- Notes on the stand-off between science and religion (Dec 74)
- Scientists polish up their public image in the North (April 75)
- The question is not where to get fuel but where are we going? (Aug 75)
- Are massive climate changes leading to a world catastrophe ? (Oct 77)
- What we need to know about the Arctic ecology (Aug 77)

News then

- ACFAS-Association francophone pour le savoir (1923-)- Jeune Scientifique, Interface, Decouvrir
- CAScW-Canadian Association of Scientific Workers (1945-1948)- The Canadian Scientist
- SCITEC –Association of the Scientific, Engineering and Technological Community of Canada (1970-1982)-SCITEC Bulletin
- AASC-Association for the Advancement of Science in Canada (1982-1987)-ACCESS
- Foster Ontario -Friends of Science, Technology, Engineering and Research- (1981-1983)
- PAGSE-Partnership Group for Science and Engineering (1995-)

Science Associations in Canada

- To foster interdisciplinary communication among the scientists of Canada
- To learn how better to harness science and technology for social and economic progress
- To marshal and channel scientific judgement and advice to the governments of Canada
- To explain science and technology to the public so that people may learn to live with change and make wise decisions about what kinds of change are in the best interest of Canada
- To coordinate, on their request, the efforts of scientific and technological organizations currently engaged in these activities

SCITEC aims

- *Science Communications and Opportunities for Public Engagement*. Adopted by the government of the day:
- Embrace the concept of participatory science communications
- Adopt communications as an integral part of the management and conduct of S&T and S&T informed policy
- Develop comprehensive S&T communications strategies
- Invest in S&T communications planning, training and delivery

**Council of Science and Technology
Advisers- 2003**

“When researchers complain that attending a monthly two-hour administrative meeting forces them out of their ruminative routine and effectively ruins their day, I don’t get angry and call them spoiled babies. I know full well where they’re coming from. When scientists disappear for days on end or don’t answer their e-mail for a week, I understand completely. They are working. Just don’t let them run the place.”

Burton on PI

- We do need time to think. We do need time to digest. We do need time to misunderstand each other, especially when fostering lost dialogue between humanities and natural sciences. We cannot continuously tell you what our science means; what it will be good for; because we simply don't know yet.

Science needs time.

—Bear with us, while we think.

Slow science manifesto

" but having gained access to the corridors of power, scientists could not find their way to the men's room. The civil servants, knowing nothing about science, were prepared to humour them but not let them run the show. The politicians in office were deferential, even gullible, but, by and large, they did not know the right questions to ask." (Lord Ritchie-Calder, 1975)

Receptors and Demand are Key

L'EXODE DES CERVEAUX...



The need for Chairs, and other things

SOME SCIENTISTS
ARE SUGGESTING
THAT RADIATION FROM
CELL PHONES MAY
BE CAUSING THE
RECENT MYSTERIOUS
DISAPPEARANCE
OF BEES...



GIVEN THE BILLIONS
OF DOLLARS INVESTED
IN CELLPHONE
TECHNOLOGY AND
CUSTOMER DEMAND,
WE IN THE MOBILE PHONE
INDUSTRY OFFER THE
FOLLOWING ASSURANCE
TO THE PUBLIC:

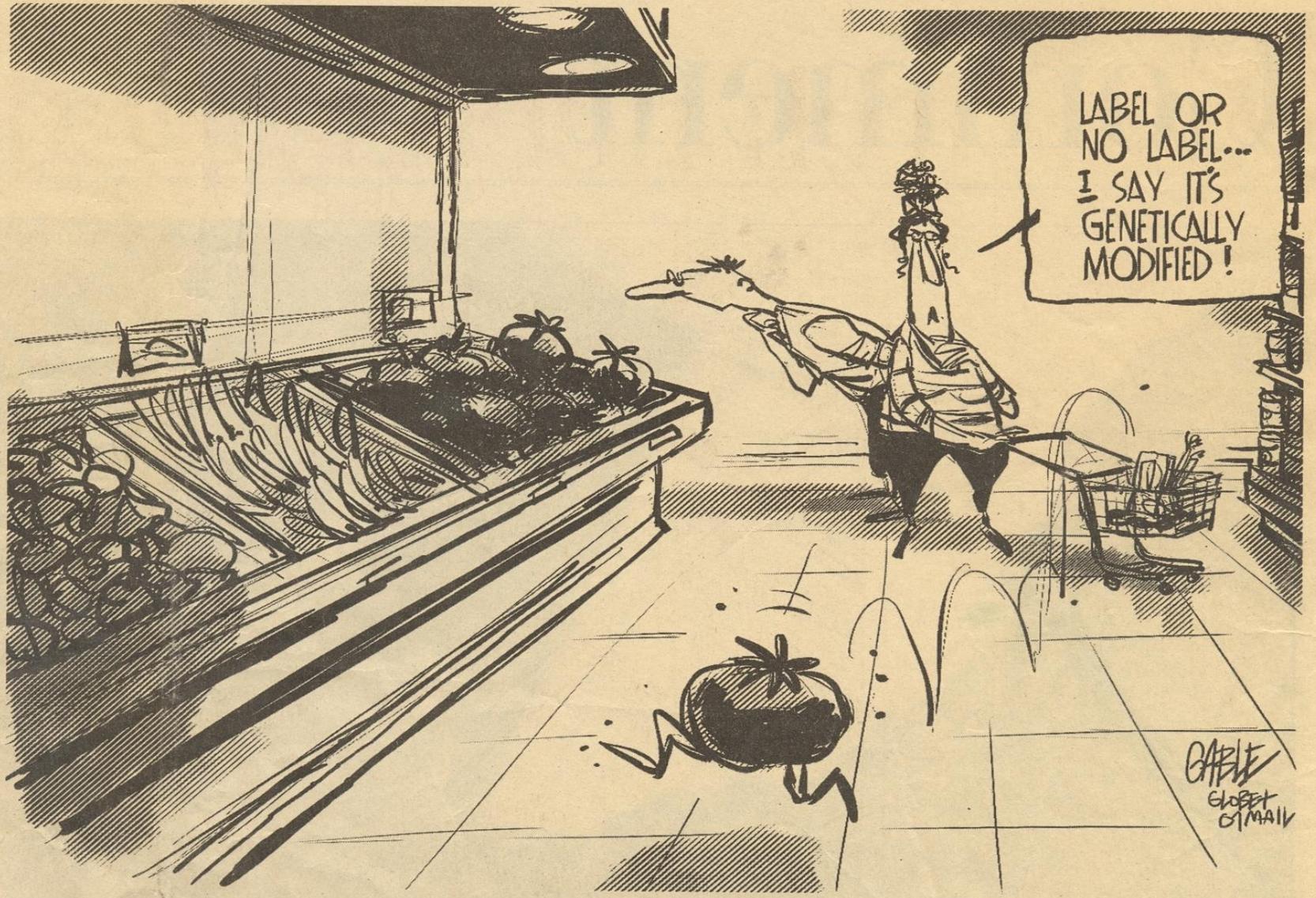


WE'LL REALLY
MISS BEES TOO.



CAM OTTAWACITIZEN
Caglecartoons.com

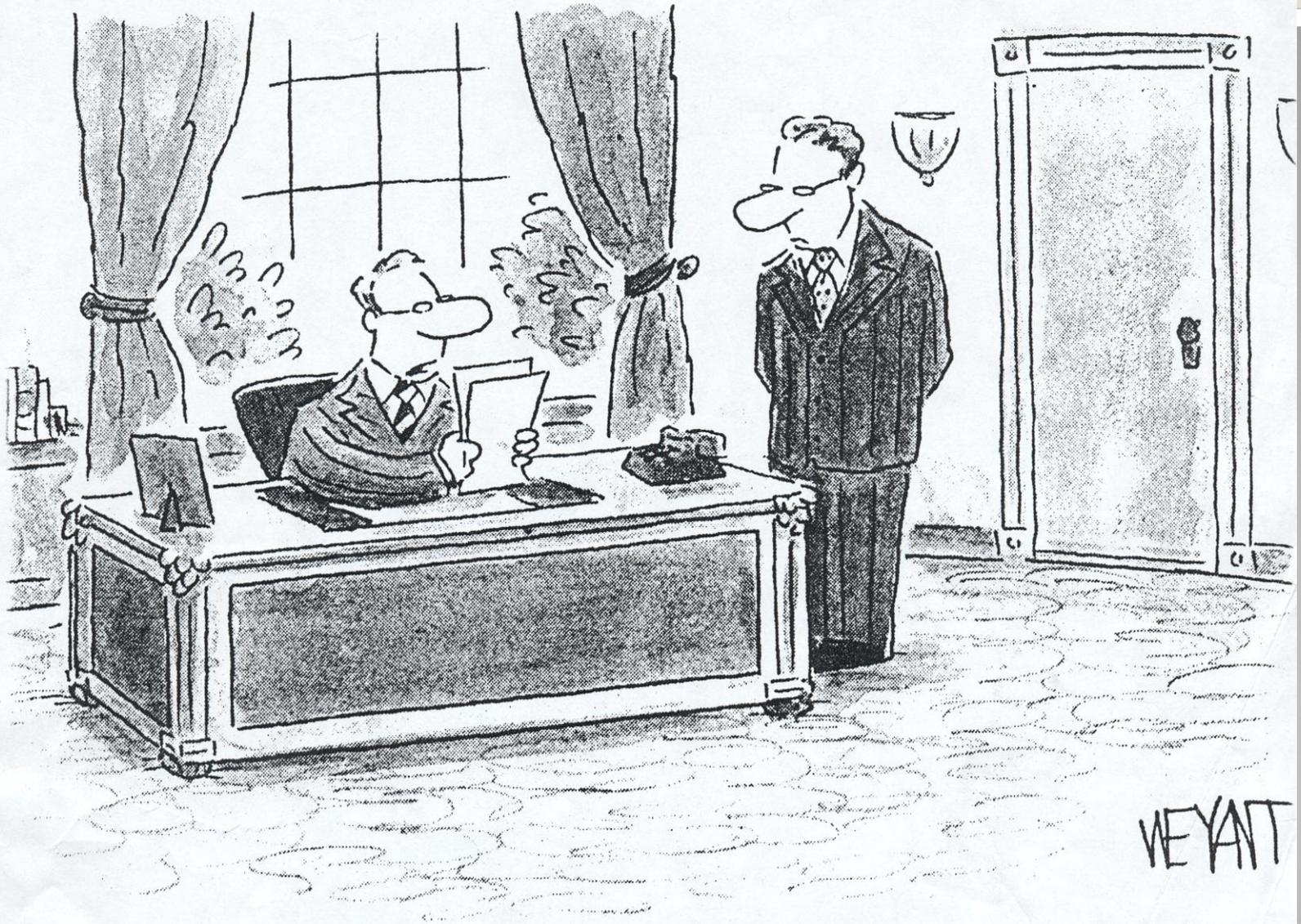
Industry Dominates the Agenda



Communicating to consumers



Inconvenient meeting?



"How accurate is our misinformation?"

Trust matters

- If scientists have been muzzled, half of the cabinet have had their voice boxes removed. And then there's the backbenchers. They've taken to communicating with a series of blinks and twitches like in a hostage video. So if you are a scientist, don't take it personally. Times have changed. The days of discussing science and your findings in public, they're over. It is a bygone era, like smoking in the supermarket. This is the new Canada. Thank you for not talking.
- *' to achieve world excellence in science and technology, Canadians must promote and defend two complementary and indivisible freedoms; the freedom of scientists to investigate and the freedom of entrepreneurs to innovate and market their products to the world' ... 2007-Canada's New Government*

Rick's Rant- and Government Policy

- The Quebec science writers' association has its science communication award in the name of :
 - a. Carl Sagan
 - b. Fernand Sequin
 - c. David Suzuki
 - d. Marc Garneau
 - e. Maxime Bernier

Spot Quiz

Spot Quiz- Which of the following is not a science advocacy outfit?

- Evidence for Democracy
- Campaign for Science and Engineering
- Frack Off
- Genetic Savings and Clones
- Sauvons la recherche
- American Association for the Advancement of Science
- Association pour l'avancement du savoir
- Ford Nation

- Make science advice public and information accessible and use social media---implement the Jenkins Panel recommendation for a new open advisory council
- Get Parliament engaged and establish a Parliamentary Science Officer
- Set up a clearinghouse for making sense of scientific information and re -adopt (adapt) science communication guidelines
- Ensure the research and policy-making communities take their responsibilities seriously---Provide scorecard of how science departments are responding to integrity and transparency
- Support independent organizations communicating science-based evidence in all forms