Canada's turn (at last)

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Wednesday, February 27, 2002, will be remembered as an important day in the history of gastroenterology in Canada. On this day, Montreal was selected as the site for the 12th World Congress of Gastroenterology, to be held in September 2005. By any definition of the term, this was not an overnight success story. The first World Congress was held in 1958, and Dr Bill Watson organized Canadian bids for congresses in 1982 and 1986. Dr Alan Thomson led a third bid for the 1994 World Congress, but the selection committee chose Los Angeles instead. Dr Gary Levy submitted a bid for the meeting that just concluded in Bangkok.

Now it is Canada's turn. Dr Richard Fedorak put together the successful application, but he would be the first to admit that it was a team effort. The bid committee consisted of the Canadian Association of Gastroenterology (CAG) members, who are already known to the international community. However, the process resulting in the successful bid began many years ago, with the withdrawal of the CAG from the Royal College Annual Meeting, which led to the first Canadian Digestive Disease Week in 1996. The new format provided opportunities to invite speakers from around the world, who, after attending the meeting, became, in effect, ambassadors for Canada within their own countries.

Next in sequence came the selection of Vancouver for the Pan American Congress (Gastro '99). Under the lead-

ership of Dr Grant Gall, the organizing committee organized the largest Pan American Congress to date and demonstrated the Canadian international conference expertise to the world.

Over the years, other international symposia organized by Canadians in the fields of inflammatory bowel disease, *Helicobacter pylori* and gut motility have demonstrated the expertise and talent available in Canada for educational programming. Achieving the balance between the expectations of industry partners and the need for balanced presentations of educational material has become a hallmark of our programming.

The Canadian team put together their successful application against this backdrop of activity. What will distinguish the 2005 Congress in Montreal from previous meetings held in venues that only have in common their attractiveness as tourist destinations? There will be an increased emphasis on education, with the fellows' course expanded to include young investigators from around the world. This Congress will be the most Internet friendly to date. A strong emphasis on evidence-based medicine is anticipated. There is a sense that this Congress will be more about education, clinical practice and improving public health rather than debating the molecular aspects of disease.

See you in Montreal! Congratulations to Dr Fedorak and his team.