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Report of the Archives Section, 1959-1960

André Vachon

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REPORT OF THE ARCHIVES SECTION, 1959-1960

Seventeen persons attended the annual business meeting in Kingston on Wednesday, June 8, 1960. Following the introduction of those present reports were received from the various archives centres.

Public Archives of Canada

Mr. Weilbrenner reported on the continued reception of records and manuscripts, and on publications of the Public Archives; Mr. Willms said that in the records centre business was much as usual, with 2,000-3,000 cubic feet a month coming in. A records management survey, which had extended over 14 months, was com-

pleted. Emergency measures planning was also under way, for relocating vital government material outside the target area.

Newfoundland

Mr. Whiteley reported that the ceremony of transfer of the Newfoundland archives from the University to the Government would take place June 22. One of the chief developments respecting records was the transfer of Moravian church records from the coast of Labrador. These constitute the most significant body of records respecting Labrador, most of them in German. They are to go to the Moravian Church, Bethlehem, Pa., but will be microfilmed first. He referred also to the commemoration this year of the 350th anniversary of the founding of the first colony, in 1610.

Nova Scotia

Dr. Fergusson reported that a records centre had been established as a result of consultants studying all phases of government, including records management. It is outside the archives, with departmental committees screening the records, but with the archivist invited to sit on the committees. Within the archives itself, it was a highly successful year, with graduate research noteworthy, including at least 12 M.A. students working during the year. There had been several acquisitions of interest including a large collection of pictures which were being sorted and catalogued, and a complete re-arrangement of the map collection also was under way.

Quebec

Mr. Ouellet reported for the Quebec Archives, stating as a development there that permission had been received to publish the Papineau correspondence.

Ontario

Dr. Spragge said that attendance in the reading room had doubled in the past eight years, including more serious students than formerly, that the Archives still is working on the problem of receiving records automatically and in the meantime is concentrating on microfilming manuscripts and newspapers, and also is re-cataloguing the picture collection. He raised questions for discussion (1) how useful indexing by names is considered to be (2) whether provision for humidity is necessary in microfilm cabinets and (3) the problem of losing staff to the teaching profession. Dr. Margaret Banks reported that they were continuing to acquire a variety of private manuscripts, such as letters written by early settlers, and also larger collections of papers.

Manitoba

Mr. Bowsfield referred to the problem of space, and said that they are hoping for additional room in the new administration building. They are now microfilming, through the Queen's Printer, all the local newspapers that come in. Second only in importance to the H. B. Co. records, the church records of the Diocese of Rupert's Land, although the property of the church, are housed in the library and archives, and a second major collection is the papers of E. L. Barber, early merchant and newspaper man, consisting of some 15,000 pieces. Mr. Bowsfield spoke of the problem of attempting to do records scheduling reference work and keeping up with pictures, with a staff of 1 ½. Other activities include co-operation with the Manitoba Historical Society in housing their material for them, and also publishing three times a year a junior historical magazine for schools.

Saskatchewan

Dr. Evelyn Eager reported that work had proceeded during the past year on the preparation of an alphabetical name index for the homestead records transferred from Ottawa. This is planned as a three year project. Considerable work was done also on the Archives of the University of Saskatchewan, and also in the arrangement and preparation of a guide for premiers' papers. Mr. Bocking spoke of quite extensive quantities of material being prepared for transfer from the Department of Education, as well as regular transfer of material from other government departments in Regina.

Glenbow Foundation

Mr. Dempsey stated that the archives was working primarily on the acquisition of material, and three honors students were employed for the summer to secure papers and interviews respecting the Mounted Police, ethnic groups, and church and missionary work. They also are microfilming as many thesis as possible from American, British and Canadian universities, which relate to Western Canada and especially Alberta. Recent accessions were Lieutenant Governor's papers, and those of Colonel McLeod. The field of business papers is being looked into also, such as the Great West Saddlery, established in 1869 which is now closing out. The addition of a cataloguer and an assistant brings the staff to three full time members and one part time, in addition to the summer students.

Anglican Church

Mr. Pollard reported that the Diocesan archives in Montreal continues to acquire records, and also photographs, and they have employed a librarian for cataloguing.

Mr. Frind stated that the School of Social Work at the University of Toronto had a bequest from the Council of Friends for securing material of ethnic groups. The reports were followed by general discussion of some of the questions raised.

The Chairman opened discussion on the Archives Course, inviting reports from any who attended or were connected with the one held in 1959. It was agreed that action towards holding another similar course probably would be up to the Archives Section, and that it would not be necessary to have it in successive years.

Progress on the catalogue of political papers was reported by the chairman of the committee, B. Weilbrenner. He gave an account of the number of institutions who had responded to the questionnaire, and stated that the committee planned to prepare a report on the results. Discussion followed on means to get out the report, since the Section has no funds, and also the question of keeping the material up to date. Suggestions were made that we might report to Council to see what could be done respecting financing a report, or that we could send out a multilithed copy first, which might arouse interest. It was moved and seconded by H. Dempsey, A. Willms, that the matter be left to the committee. Carried.

The annual survey of archivists positions was discussed, with the opinion expressed that it was of value to continue it, that a supplement would serve from time to time instead of a completely new edition each year, and there seemed little preference as to what time of the year it should come out.

Members should let the secretary know of new names to go on the mailing list.

One of the suggestions for papers for future meetings was that of specific research problems to indicate untapped holdings, involving a survey by someone of the material, or alternatively, having this done for one area. It was suggested also that a paper might be given on an outstanding Canadian archivist.

The question was raised of means of preserving documents, and discussion followed on the use of such material as "transpera", and the merits of laminating, and availability of a thinner film for it.

The following officers were elected for the coming year:

Chairman: Hart Bowsfield re-elected.

Vice-Chairman: Bruce Fergusson re-elected.

Secretary: André Vachon.