

were subject to a law giving all members of the public ready access to a wide range of municipal documents. The current Municipal Act (1977, Section 216 [1]) states that

any person, at all reasonable hours, may inspect any records, books, accounts and documents in the possession or under the control of the clerk, except interdepartmental correspondence and reports of officials of any department or of solicitors for the corporation made to council, board of control or any committee of council, and the clerk within a reasonable time shall furnish copies of them....

The effect of this legislation is to open a wide range of documents to the public, a privilege not limited to citizens or inhabitants of the municipality. Reports are restricted only until they reach City Council, then they automatically become public documents. Recent legal decisions have confined the meaning of "inter-departmental correspondence" to a narrow range of interpretations.

Since this section of the Act does not seem to be well known by either administrators or the public, there has been very little public demand for access to municipal records. If Ottawa can be taken as an example, the public was effectively excluded by this ignorance from the city's records until the establishment of the City Archives three years ago. A decision of City Council in May, 1974 on "Privileged Information" restricts a considerable number of city records from the public on grounds of confidentiality. The City is now planning a new policy for freedom of access which will provide guidelines for the ordinary citizen.

Meanwhile, there are moves to compel Ontario's municipalities to follow a more open policy. In 1974, in the Ontario High Court, the City Clerk of Timmins was forced to produce certain financial records to a ratepayer, even though the records were kept by another City Department and not by the City Clerk. More recently, a citizen of Port Hope was successful in obtaining access to that municipality's records. It is clear that many municipalities will soon find it necessary to organize their records more effectively so that citizens can exercise their right to know.

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ACA Copyright Committee in Reply to Keyes-Brunet

In its response to the Keyes-Brunet working paper, *Copyright in Canada: Proposals for a Revision of the Law* (1977), the Association of Canadian Archivists' Copyright Committee has welcomed the improvements made upon previous statements and proposals for revising the Copyright Act, but continues to press for less restrictive and confusing provisions.

Duration of copyright is a matter of great concern to archivists. Keyes and Brunet recommended that copyright on unpublished writings continue for seventy-five years after the death of the author, or one hundred years if the material had been deposited in an archives. The committee opposes this complicated and illogical system, and recommends a term of fifty years after the death of the author in all cases. For corporate records, a term of one hundred years after the creation of the document is suggested. In the case of Crown Copyright, the committee agrees with Keyes and Brunet that the regulations should be clarified, but adds the recommendation that Crown Copyright on unpublished material should subsist for a term of fifty years after the creation of the document. For unpublished corporate records, one hundred years after the date of creation is suggested. In the case of photographs, the present term of fifty

years after the creation of the original negative; Keyes and Brunet suggested changing this to fifty years after the death of the author. The committee feels this recommendation is very complicated, without good reason, and expresses the view that the present law should not be changed in this respect. As far as sound recordings are concerned, the committee recommends that interviewees in an oral history recording situation might be given rather more protection of their rights.

Copying by archival repositories to preserve materials from physical deterioration or theft is strongly advocated by the Committee which gives little room for the impractical Keyes-Brunet reliance on contractual arrangements with copyright holders. Provided that the notion of "fair dealing" is upheld for both unpublished and published material, it also recommends making available copies of entire collections of archival material for use by researchers in other repositories. Some interest is shown in the Keyes-Brunet idea that copyright holders might form collectives to further protect their interests, though the Committee is keen to see a professional archives voice in the operation of any supervising government tribunal. The committee stresses that the holders of copyright on unpublished material are often unaware of, or unconcerned about, their rights, and that the Keyes-Brunet proposals which would allow no exceptions for researchers would inhibit research with no corresponding benefit to anyone. Finally, the committee supports the Keyes-Brunet recommendations in favour of continuing contact among interested parties, but with the proviso that this should not be viewed as a substitute for an adequate Copyright Act.

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Niagara Historical Resource Centre

The official opening of the Niagara Historical Resource Centre on 29 May 1977 marked the establishment of a significant archival operation in the community of Niagara-on-the-Lake. The Centre is the result of a co-operative programme between the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library and the Niagara Historical Society. Both recognized the advantages of a local research service and, through this programme, facilities and information could be made mutually available to researchers. The Library provided the facilities for the records management file system, reference inventories, microfilm equipment and a separate research area located in the renovated Jail-Keeper's Room of the Town Court House. The Society provided facilities for a community repository, laboratory for paper conservation, and a small depot for acid-free storage materials, located in its museum two blocks away.

The idea for the Niagara Historical Research Centre originates with Peter G. White and Lynne Teather, who laid out the format and stages of development for the Library and the Society by which the Centre could function and expand, primarily as a local educational facility as well as a public service. During the summer months Teather worked with the Library staff to achieve its goals for the Centre. By the end of 1976, the file systems were brought up to date, an inventory published and distributed, and a separate listing made of microfilm for purchase from archives holding records relevant to this community. In addition, the Library acquired microfilm records from the Town, the Niagara Historical Society, Niagara newspapers, the Archives of Ontario, and the Canadian Library Association. A microfilm print-out viewer was ordered, and installed in the research room prior to the opening of the Centre. During the summer of this year, the Library received a government grant to catalogue microfilm and several students matched the cards of the classification file with each reel. A genealogy file was