

The Wilson Report*

The report of the Consultative Group on Canadian Archives presents a timely overview, including the first extensive statistical analysis, of one of the most diverse and overlooked institutional fields in the country. Canadians who are concerned about the preservation of their heritage will find the report compels their interest. Even more so, governments at all levels, and institutions such as the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada which share in the responsibility for Canadian culture, will find that they are challenged to come to grips with the serious present situation of our archives.

André Fortier, President, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada in *Canadian Archives*, 1980, foreword, p.1.

List of recommendations

- 1 We recommend that all public archives re-evaluate their overall programs to achieve an appropriate balance between their traditional institutional programs and new programs designed to provide leadership to a cooperative system of archives in their region.
- 2 We recommend that the archives in each province form a coordinated network to establish common priorities and to develop services, facilities and programs of benefit to all.
- 3 We recommend that the Public Archives of Canada establish an Extension Branch to administer consulting services, information services, technical facilities and a grant program for the benefit of the entire archival system, with policies and priorities to be established on the recommendation of a National Archival Advisory Committee.
- 4 We recommend that the federal government amend the Public Archives Act (R.S.C. 1970, Chapter P-27) as soon as possible to permit the programs we are recommending and to provide a solid legislative base for the future development of the Public Archives of Canada.
- 5 We recommend that the annual budget of the Public Archives of Canada be increased by \$2.5 million for programs to be administered by the new Extension Branch.
- 6 We recommend the formation of a Canadian Association of Archives to plan projects and programs affecting archives and to express the institutional viewpoint on matters of public policy or professional activity.

**Canadian Archives. Report of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada by the Consultative Group on Canadian Archives*, chairman Ian Wilson (Ottawa, 1980)

- 7 We recommend that the Canadian Conservation Institute develop an increased emphasis on providing conservation training, consultation and services to the archives system, and that appropriate funding, staff and advisers be added for this purpose.
- 8 We recommend that the Heritage Canada Foundation reassess its responsibility for all heritage matters and specifically that it begin programs to involve the public in archival concerns.
- 9 We recommend that the new Extension Branch of the Public Archives of Canada consider providing funds to assist in the establishment of a suitable master's program in archival science in each official language at Canadian universities to serve the immediate educational needs of the entire archival system.
- 10 We recommend that the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council add archival science to its list of eligible disciplines for research grants; that archivists, able to obtain sabbatical leave from their institutions, be eligible for Leave Fellowships; and that archives be considered as eligible institutions for Negotiated Grants.
- 11 We recommend that research grants awarded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council which impinge substantially on specific archives include an appropriate amount to assist the archives in providing the required services.

We recommend that the SSHRC routinely involve archivists in assessing applications in the humanities and social sciences.

We recommend that all archives develop accounting systems that permit them to receive and use payments for services provided.
- 12 We recommend that all governments, universities, corporations and other organizations establish guidelines for their officials and employees clearly defining which records belong to the government or institution and which to the individual.
- 13 We recommend that in consultation with the proposed Canadian Association of Archives, and with the Association des archivistes du Québec and the Association of Canadian Archivists, the Secretary of State initiate the revision of the Cultural Property Export and Import Act with a view to making it an effective tool for the preservation of archival materials within Canada by private as well as public institutions.
- 14 We recommend that the Income Tax Act be amended to encourage corporations to establish and to maintain their own corporate archives as a service to the public.
- 15 We support the recommendation of the Symons Report that a federal parliamentary committee or other appropriate committee of inquiry be asked to study problems relating to the disposition of the business records and papers of international corporations operating in Canada, and to consider the application of such controls to other international organizations operating in Canada, including labour unions, charitable and cultural associations, and the like.

We further recommended that the Dominion Archivist raise these issues in the International Council on Archives with a view to establishing archival guidelines for multinational corporations.
- 16 We recommend that until acid-free archival storage containers and other conservation supplies are manufactured in Canada, the federal government remove all import tariffs on such supplies.
- 17 We recommend that the new Extension Branch of the Public Archives of Canada fund a study and develop consultants in the area of archival security, and that the branch coordinate a national register of stolen documents.

- 18 We recommend that the federal government amend the Copyright Act to reflect the legitimate needs of archives, archivists and historical researchers.
- 19 We recommend that Canadian archives, the archival associations and networks, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and the associations of researchers monitor and respond to all proposals for freedom of information or personal privacy legislation to ensure that the archival process is an integral part of such proposals and that long-term research requirements are fully recognized.

Official Response of the Association of Canadian Archivists*

The response of the Association of Canadian Archivists (ACA) to the SSHRCC's Consultative Group *Report on Canadian Archives*, is based on its concern for archival repositories and their contents, for archivists in Canada responsible for them, and for their use by the public. The *Report*, on the other hand, concentrates "on the institutional structures devoted to the archival process." The *Report* begins with a functional definition of archives to which the majority of archivists readily assent. The *Report* places Canadian archives in historical perspective and then makes a statistical analysis of the present state of archives in Canada on the basis of an extensive survey — virtually the first of its kind in Canada. The Association recognizes the value of regular gathering of statistics about archives, and will encourage the appropriate authorities to continue and improve upon the *Report's* survey. Though there is some doubt about the accuracy of the figures derived from the survey, the *Report's* conclusion that Canadian archives are underfunded is incontestable. Moreover, the *Report* portrays a varied and vibrant archival landscape. In the last two decades, Canadian Archives have undoubtedly grown faster than in any other period in their history. What is now needed is a co-ordinated approach to bring together and to support the efforts of all archives and archivists.

We support the first and second recommendations of the *Report* but we believe the instrument that should be chosen to direct the implementation of these recommendations should be co-ordinated by representatives of all archives through a provincial base, recommended in the *Report* itself. The services, the facilities, the consultation, and the programmes that are necessary to accomplish the goals set out in the *Report* should derive from the efforts of institutions to fulfil their first responsibility. It is important that institutions re-evaluate their priorities and we support the *Report's* position that archives must be responsible for records of their sponsor first. Management of an institution's records must involve archivists at all stages to ensure that archives receive those records of legal, administrative and informational value to the agency the archives serves and from which cultural benefits will naturally be derived by their preservation. The means of accomplishing these goals should incorporate the views of keepers, owners and users of archives. The development of the necessary facilities and services that are broadly-based and essential to the priorities established by the provincial base proposed by the *Report's* first two recommendations may be retarded if left to extension activities of existing archives to implement.

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The ACA believes there are more appropriate solutions than those put forward by the *Report*. We believe they are more realistic approaches toward the achievement of the objectives of the *Report* and the objective of the institutions the *Report* is concerned to see develop. The following analysis of the *Report's* 19 Recommendations presents, in some cases, other courses of action where we think chances of achieving the desired result would be greater if our course of action were adopted. The ACA, like the authors of the *Report*, is concerned to see effective action taken toward solving major problems confronting archives and archivists in Canada and we hope that our criticisms will be seen as both positive and constructive.

Recommendation #1

This is the most important recommendation of the *Report* from which most of the other recommendations follow. The ACA fully endorses the recommendation and the rationale behind it which should receive the considered study of all those interested in the development of Canadian archives. It is firmly based on well-established archival principles. The first of these principles, the principle of provenance, asserts that records originating from the same source must stay together and that the body creating records maintains a continuous custody of them by sponsoring a functioning archives. It follows then that governments, private institutions, and other corporate bodies should be encouraged to develop their own archives. We note that the *Report* seems to miss the effect of its own argument in this regard when it suggests that there is no need for "initiatives in funding new archives." On the contrary, and as the *Report* itself states, incentives are needed to assist all sorts of institutions to preserve their own archives (p. 62).

Secondly, we agree completely with the *Report's* statement that all archives must depend for their continuing core funding on their parent body. Our concern is that existing archives are neither establishing priorities nor directing sufficient funds to the preservation of the records of their sponsor through comprehensive records management programmes. The first recommendation is not explicit on these points but they are important as constituting the first step on the road to establishing the new programs that will provide the leadership for a co-ordinated approach to the development of archives and the archival profession in Canada. It is self-evident that establishing priorities will help to define most acquisition strategies and less on the danger of conflict through unreasonable competition. Although this problem has been addressed by archivists, so far there has not been much success. Acquisition strategies, descriptive standards, subject access codes, and a host of other major problems referred to throughout the *Report* will remain neglected until archives and archivists have the necessary financial resources to tackle these matters. Only then will inter-institutional and inter-provincial networks be possible.

In arriving at its recommendation, the *Report* makes it very clear that centralization of archives is not appropriate. This conclusion rests, quite correctly, on archival principles and other realistic arguments for a decentralized approach to archival service, such as the *Report's* observations that "a much broader spectrum of historically important materials can be preserved; the full financial burden does not fall directly on the public purse; and the archives remain a living part of their institutional or local community." (p. 66). From these reasons derives the call in this recommendation for existing publicly-funded archives to re-evaluate their broad legislative mandates. In this way, the total archives mandate does not have to be fulfilled by exercising proprietary rights to records. Rather, by supporting and encouraging institutional, local, and even thematic archives, the publicly-funded archives can complement and assist in the co-ordination of other archival programs. Only in this way, as the *Report* repeatedly stresses, can the total archives mandate be fulfilled and the nation's documentary heritage be preserved.

Recommendation #2

We endorse the *Report's* advocacy of a co-ordinated network in each province to establish common priorities and to develop services, facilities and programmes of benefit to all. However, we are concerned about the vehicle the *Report* proposes to secure these standards (see Recommendation #3) and we regret that the authors of the *Report* did not formulate this recommendation in such a way that would give responsibility and direction to archives established in provincial jurisdictions to take up the important role ascribed to them throughout.

The emphasis for archival development in Canada, the *Report* states, must be on a provincial basis. The programs, services, and facilities referred to in the *Report* (and which the *Report* would give to the Public Archives of Canada) are already in place in most of the provinces. Attaching them to the Public Archives of Canada (PAC) administered through an Extension Branch would be redundant and a waste of public funds. Culture and heritage resources are primarily a provincial responsibility, a sentiment reiterated and endorsed at the recent conference of Federal-Provincial Ministers of Culture. The National Museum Corporation's withdrawal of the regional Conservation Centres of the Canadian Conservation Institute is evidence enough of the difficulty of direct federal action in the cultural and heritage resource field without reference to provincial involvement and financial commitment. It is unreasonable to expect the federal government to shoulder the entire burden in a field of shared responsibility.

Furthermore, the "systems of archives" and "networks" which the *Report* envisages in each province can only be instituted once each archives has found the resources to acquire, house, arrange and describe its records. The *Report* has properly identified that progress in these areas involves more than spending money. Many archives need other forms of support and advice for staff development, technical services and special programmes. Each province should take the lead in establishing and publicizing its own priorities, which may not be the same in all areas of the country. If any federal money is forthcoming for assistance in the development of systems, networks, or any other archival project having national benefits, then these federal funds should take the form of block grants with equivalent matching or proportionate contributions from the province or provinces in which the network or other project is to be developed.

Recommendation #3

There is a fundamental contradiction in the *Report's* strategy for implementing the provincially-based networks which it envisages. While on the one hand it asserts the need to recognize the institutionality of archives and their base within the provinces, on the other hand it seeks to develop the provincial base through a branch of a federal government agency.

An Extension Branch of the Public Archives of Canada is not an appropriate solution for several reasons. Past experience has shown that unless a basic change to a more responsive attitude were to take place, the national network the *Report* sees developing through the initiative of the Public Archives of Canada would not likely be successful. Neither new legislation expanding the PAC's mandate nor grafting new branches on an already overburdened federal archives will produce the necessary change of attitude called for in the *Report* (p. 72). To vest all the financial resources for the implementation of a "comprehensive national system of autonomous archives" in one agency of government leaves such a proposal resting on very fragile foundations. Delegating to one federal agency the responsibility for leadership, direction and development of systems and networks for archives in Canada cannot possibly be successful, as the National Museums Corporation experience has shown so well in the field of museums. Substantial sums of money are thrown into high administrative overhead costs which diverts

funds from substantive projects (including research, technical services and grants) where the need is greatest. Finally, the serious concerns and interests archivists have in matters such as security of collections, copyright, tariff review, freedom of information and privacy legislation cannot effectively be advanced by one federal government agency.

Therefore, what is required is not an Extension Branch, but an independent funding and co-ordinating agency through which the programs, studies, and recommendations of the Report can be implemented.

The objectives of a National Archival Records Commission would be the preservation and future use of historical records, broadly defined to include all records that have permanent value to society for any of the reasons archivists ordinarily apply in appraisal and for more than the promotion of scholarly and humanistic research. Such a Commission would be a co-ordinating body which would be responsible for the development of a national plan derived from priorities established within the provinces. We have carefully studied the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, the American parallel to the Commission we are proposing, and we believe the principles on which it operates merit consideration.*

The National Archival Records Commission we are proposing as an alternative to an Extension Branch of the PAC would, we suggest, include in its membership a representative from the PAC, representatives from the ACA and the Association des archivistes du Quebec (AAQ), representation on a rotating basis from institutional archives and from associations representing users of archives, a representative from the federal government and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Each province would have a Provincial Archival Co-ordinating Board of users, keepers and owners of archives similar to the Provincial Archives Network Board suggested in the *Report* (p. 68). Most provinces have established Boards devoted to the planned preservation of archaeological and historic sites and buildings. It would seem to be logical for the provinces to develop similar structures to accommodate the archives which preserve the very records on which much heritage preservation is based. These Provincial Archival Co-ordinating Boards would determine priorities within the province after basic archival needs and problems within the province had been identified. Once priorities had been established by the Provincial Board (reviewed annually and updated as required) they would be forwarded to the National Archival Records Commission in order for the Commission to co-ordinate priorities and programmes and then consider applications for grants to archival projects from individuals, institutions, and associations in the context of those priorities approved by the provinces.

Projects for which funds might be granted would include: *capital construction costs for specific pieces of equipment*, for example, conservation storage vaults for film, photographs, computer tape; *training programmes for archivists* sponsored by a regional association of archivists or archives within a province; *awards and travel bursaries* to allow individual archivists to attend provincial archives internship programs or distant university graduate programs in archival studies; *publications* such as finding aids or manuals developed for training courses on all aspects of archives; *research* into studies of and solutions to archival problems, for example, descriptive standards, building codes for archives, security and legislation.

*For a useful review and critique of the NHPRC and the State Advisory Boards see Larry J. Hackman, "The Historical Records Program: the States and the Nation," and F. Gerald Ham, "NHPRC's Records Program and the Development of Statewide Archival Planning," in *The American Archivist* 43, no. 1 (1980): 24-32 and 33-42. The types of projects funded by the Records Program can be found in the Commission's publication *Annotation*.

We believe such a Commission and associated Provincial Boards is more practical and more representative of archivists and archives in Canada than the *Report's* proposal to establish an Extension Branch within the Public Archives of Canada. Our proposal to constitute a National Archival Records Commission and Provincial/Territorial Archival Co-ordinating Boards representative of all types and sizes of archives, of the professional associations of archivists, and users and sponsors of archives, will allow for more thorough assessments of archival needs and problems provincially and accordingly provide a list of national priorities that more accurately reflects archival needs in Canada. The Provincial Boards should include more than just the heads of a certain number of institutions so that the input and priorities established will come from those who understand provincial, and by inference thence the national, needs of archives and users of archives, and archivists.

We believe also that our proposal will reduce overhead administrative expenses and eliminate additional expenses that would have to be borne by Canadian archives if yet another Association of Canadian Archives were set up. Given the severe under-funding of Canadian archives, it is essential that any funds allocated toward the solution of the many problems facing archives and archivists in Canada (as revealed in the *Report*) be allocated directly to the solution of those problems. In addition, our proposal has the advantage of being able to monitor federal and provincial employment programmes, such as Canada Works and other similar projects which may have an impact on provincial and national archival priorities. Such projects could be channelled through the Provincial Boards and National Archival Records Commission to determine their place in the context of national and provincial archival priorities.

The *Report* suggests that priority be given to programmes and projects to assist the evolution of a national system of archives (p. 70). This will be most effectively accomplished through the activities of our proposed National Archival Records Commission. One Extension Branch in a federal government department cannot be responsible for linking autonomous provincial boards. Rather, our Provincial Boards will link themselves through the co-ordinating efforts of the National Archival Records Commission. Archives in the provinces, such as churches, universities, businesses, labour unions and the archives of other institutions will be involved in planning priorities designed to reach the goal of creating co-ordinated systems and networks.

Recommendations #4 and #5

The future development of Canadian archives will depend on the wise allocation of scarce financial resources. As the *Report* underscores, it is essential that a basic minimum amount be allocated to commence work on several fronts. At the same time, to establish a National Archival Records Commission rather than an Extension Branch of the PAC will require a new structure, perhaps through federal legislation. It is possible that separate statutory provisions in the Public Archives Act, presently undergoing revision, could be included to provide for the establishment of an independent National Archival Records Commission. Of course, any new federal expenditure of funds for archives could be directed to the National Archival Records Commission.

Recommendation #6

This recommendation compounds the problem. Such an Association as described by the *Report* will not be representative. The *Report's* suggestion for membership by budget limitation is discriminatory and hardly representative of essential archival institutions in its own proposed network.

Standards for description, codes of ethics, training, conservation and numerous other matters are issues that have to be dealt with on an institutional and professional basis.

An elite group cannot impose national standards or solutions to problems specified in the Report.

Recommendation #7

The Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI) cannot be expected to solve the problems of conservation facing archivists. The CCI was created by the National Museums Corporation to provide conservation services to museums. Instead of directing our initiative and funds into an already large administrative bureaucracy, the ACA would recommend that a National Archival Conservation Institute be established. The ACA believes that this Institute should conduct research into all aspects of archival conservation including the establishment of standards for archival buildings, paper, microfilm, photograph, and audio-visual media. A National Archival Conservation Institute would also sponsor training courses and national conferences where the results of research could be disseminated to conservators in the provinces. Research findings and standards could be published in a regular archives conservation bulletin. Funds for any or all of these projects could, if approved, come from the National Archival Records Commission if such projects fell among the priorities established by the provinces and the Commission.

The Canadian Conservation Institute has not concentrated on archival conservation problems and archival materials have not been able to compete for attention with artifacts and works of art. It is not reasonable therefore to expect from the CCI a change of emphasis or even a greater focus on archival problems and research of benefit to archivists.

Recommendation #8

We fully support the *Report's* recommendation that Heritage Canada reassess its responsibility for all heritage matters. Heritage means more than a built heritage, and if a national body exists to promote and publicize heritage, archives and archivists should be understood, involved, and benefit. As the *Report* makes clear, archives are integral to the research and understanding of our national heritage and we therefore suggest that archivists be represented, as the Report recommends, on Heritage Canada's Board of Governors and staff.

Recommendation #9

When the Association of Canadian Archivists was formed in 1975 it placed graduate education for archivists at the top of its list of priorities for the development of the profession. We are pleased, therefore, that the *Report* has also recognized this important component in the development of a comprehensive archival system. However, we fail to see how it would be possible for a federal government department to channel funds through a university toward the establishment of a graduate programme in archival studies. Universities and colleges will determine, in the final analysis, whether such programmes are justified, as we believe they are, and they have their own internal procedures to acquire funding for them. The University of British Columbia's Graduate Programme in Archival Studies will commence in the fall of 1981. We are confident that other universities will develop similar courses if they recognize that there is a need for them. The ACA, as it has in the University of British Columbia case, will take a positive role in providing advice and encouragement to university faculty and administrators interested in establishing graduate programmes in archival studies. We do not foresee the establishment of a university programme in every region but there are archivists across the country who would benefit from the opportunity of acquiring the professional education required by a university course. We suggest that federal and provincial monies should be made available to provide scholarships and/or travel bursaries enabling successful applicants to attend. In the event that the National Archival Records Commis-

sion is established, monies for these scholarships, bursaries and loan funds could be channelled through the Commission for distribution to students, with special consideration for students farthest from the university sponsoring the course.

Recommendations #10 and #11

The ACA fully endorses these recommendations.

Recommendations #12 to #19

The recommendations in Chapters 5 and 6 of the *Report* are all based on the principles of archives and follow from the first recommendation of the *Report*, specifying ways in which institutions can be encouraged to establish and maintain an archives and thereby be a component of the provincial and national networks envisaged by the *Report*. We therefore support these recommendations (noting that Recommendation #17 would be accomplished through the National Archival Records Commission rather than a PAC Extension Branch) and urge the appropriate administrative bodies within government, and associations outside of government, to seek their implementation.

The ACA believes that there is much more that needs to be done in the field of conservation than the *Report* recommends, but what it recommends is sound. In another section of this response (under Recommendation #7) we have proposed a role for a National Archival Conservation Institute in research, training and publications related to archival conservation. In addition, co-operative buying projects could be arranged between provinces if this were determined to be a priority among several provinces. The National Archival Conservation Institute could maintain an up-to-date list of suppliers of conservation materials for archives. Research into environmental controls, specifications for vaults and storage units for various media (film, computer tape, colour and black and white film, and video tape, etc.) are only a few of the studies that need to be embarked upon and for which a National Archival Institute would be well-suited.

Conservation is only one subject of concern to archivists. Throughout the *Report*, and in this response, we have identified several others. However, without the financial resources and an administrative mechanism both in the provinces and at the federal level to tackle them, the crisis in Canadian archives will only worsen.

The Association of Canadian Archivists is grateful to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for initiating this survey of Canadian Archives and publishing its *Report of the Consultative Group on Archives*. Nevertheless, archivists not archives must now take up the initiative and work in their own jurisdictions and with their professional associations to achieve some positive results.

Individual Responses

In recognition of the milestone status which the Wilson Report must inevitably acquire in the history of Canadian archival development, Archivaria requested 50 programme administrators across the country to assess the Report's recommendations insofar as they bore upon their respective programmes. The following are the replies received — in alphabetical order of correspondent.

JOAN BAILLIE, Archivist, Canadian Opera Company:

Although Professor Symons described, without mincing words, present attitudes toward the history of the Performing Arts in Canada (findings which are supported by the editorial and research staffs of the Encyclopedia of Music in Canada) the report of SSHRCC at no time addresses itself to this problem. In all probability an Extension

Branch of PAC, a provincial network, and a Canadian Association of Archives (provided they were not emasculated by bureaucracy and red tape) would be of inestimable value to this under-represented group. Certainly an education program would require instruction in, and appreciation of, the administrative and artistic sides of the Performing Arts. However, all these proposals are academic until some decision is reached by someone, somewhere, as to whether the records of Canada's Arts are part of the world of archives and who will bear the costs of their preservation.

DONALD BAIRD, University Archivist, Simon Fraser University:

As I view my own program at a university archives in western Canada I feel myself professionally isolated. I also perceive isolation in our provincial archival landscape. And when I view the national archival enterprise I see a series of fiefdoms, each content with in its vaults but gregarious enough to process ceremoniously to the "Learneds" once a year. How will the report to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council change this?

The Consultative Group has asked us all to cooperate and provide leadership in our region which is a worthy sentiment but what are the realities? Within the provinces, the Provincial Archives is the pre-eminent institution with funds, staff and collections. Cooperation, I have found, can take place between equals but seldom do large institutions cooperate with small ones. This is particularly so when resources are in demand and archives are, we are told, continually indigent. Cooperation, however, is not a new concept but its effectiveness in this context has not been noticeable to me. We move on then to consider forming a coordinated network for archival activities in the provinces. Good! Let's do it. But where's the funding or the strategy to be used to accomplish it? One could suggest, for example, that all Provincial/Territorial Archivists attend a high profile meeting with the Dominion Archivist to announce a plan for improved funding in the provinces. What are we given? A miraculous \$100,000 to \$500,000 to establish this network but nothing concrete to suggest from where it might come.

In considering the Public Archives of Canada, it is obvious that it continues to be the major jewel in the archival network in Canada. Other countries from time to time, have found that their national archives are in contention with other national cultural agencies to the detriment of the archives. Even in Canada there is the continuing saga of who should collect primary source material: the National Library or the Public Archives. That in 1980 one should find such a controversy begs the need for a strong national archives with an energetic administration and nation-wide support.

The Consultative Group report asks us to reinforce the strength of the Public Archives by attaching to it an Extension Branch which will administer "consulting services, information services, technical facilities and a grant program for the benefit of the entire archival system. . .". Some of the first three activities, I believe, have been successfully undertaken by the Public Archives, only a "grant program" has not been instituted. It is the latter activity, the "grant program" that is the most innovative recommendation in a litany of unremarkable desires. The price tag would be \$2.5 million a year and that size injection seems about right to benefit all Canadian archives but turning it over to P.A.C. is like "the rich get richer and the poor get poorer".

In 1978 the P.A.C. budget was \$16.5 million, the total provincial archives budget was only one-third that size and all Canadian archives, excluding P.A.C., had a total of \$10.8 million. (page 32) The thrust of the report, as I read it, is to understand the current status of Canadian archives and to assist the *entire archival enterprise* if such assistance is wanting. I do not think any reader will profoundly disagree with the introductory text for it is palpably excellent. Disagreement may be found with some recommendations, and I disagree. I disagree with the Extension Branch concept, not because

P.A.C. attaches to it but because that is where the money attaches. The Association of Canadian Archivists (A.C.A.) contends that there are other and better models than the Extension Branch and they proffer a variation of the American National Historical Publications and Records Commission (N.H.P.R.C.). Their model, a *National Historical Records Commission*, is an autonomous agency that will act, in place of P.A.C., to promote such major priorities as:

- The preservation of records
- Surveys of records not in archives
- Guides to records in archives
- Education and training of archivists
- Arrangement, description and processing of archives

The importance of this concept is that each of the archives in any province or territory could compete for funds on the merits of their applications. Funds, that \$2.5 million mentioned above, would be distributed throughout Canada and *all archives* could share, even P.A.C. Articulating mechanisms have been designed à la N.H.P.R.C.

Now what do you know about the Dominion, Provincial and Territorial Archivists' Conference? I know nothing of them but I believe that some form of communication on archival matters should exist across Canada. I strongly support the concept of a Canadian Association of Archives or by any other name. There are similar associations for museums, libraries, computing facilities, etc., and I feel that those with budgets of \$100,000 should be charter members. The only magic of 10k is that there may be enough funds in the budget to allow the archivist to travel to the meeting.

And then there is education! In 1929, McGill University established the first Library School in Canada. There was no National Library but there was the Public Archives of Canada. Why was there never any impetus to have any professional graduate training for archivists in those years? Move forward to 1980 and you find one program of museology at the University of Toronto and one program in arts management at York University and six programs in librarianship: the University of British Columbia, University of Alberta, University of Western Ontario, University of Toronto, Université de Montréal and Dalhousie University but still no programs in Archival Science!

The University of British Columbia will begin a professional program in archival science in 1981 and the enrolment will partially determine its success. This will give us another option to place against graduate students in Librarianship and History. The program is administered jointly between the Department of History and the School of Librarianship. Unfortunately, the position is initially at the assistant professor level and in the School of Librarianship. Who will influence who? But because of the long enduring disregard for university training we cannot be fashionably carping.

GEORGE BRANDAK, Archivist, Special Collections, University of British Columbia:

Chairpersons are usually very influential in the final format of a report and this one is no exception. During the Association of Canadian Archivists' Conference on the Symons Report held at Fredericton, in June 1977, Ian Wilson stated that the primary objective of an archives, whether it be federal, provincial, university, or municipal, was a cultural one — that of serving its community. Since the community must be served, and the records of ethnic, labour, business, and special interest groups in regions could be preserved in those regions, Wilson suggested a co-operative archives in which publicly funded facilities for the care of their records would be shared by various institutions. Sounds similar to the tone of the present report, doesn't it? Since the Symons Commission on Canadian Studies recommended the creation of national network of regional archives; since the Association For Canadian Studies Conference at Charlottetown, in

May 1977, recommended the development of a national and regional plan to co-ordinate archival activity (specifically, the creation of a flexible network of regional archives to serve as a framework for archival diffusion and to promote collections development in a rational manner throughout the country) and forwarded the resolution to the Secretary of State; and since a survey of archivists in 1977 showed that they favoured the concept of a network of regional archives by approximately two to one (though were concerned over the differences between theory and practice, definition of the term "region" and had little confidence in universities as regional archives), archivists do seem to have come to a consensus on the necessity of networking. Yet there is no visible agreement on the mechanism that will be used to achieve the desired end.

The Consultative Group looked to the Public Archives of Canada to provide its traditional leadership towards the development of a cooperative regional system of archives. After all, the size, budget, and facilities of the Public Archives, have contributed significantly to archival development in Canada. It pioneered the development of the total archives concept in Canada in which textual, photographic, cartographic, machine-readable, and sound records of national, provincial, or local significance are preserved by one institution. This concept is unique to Canada and led other Canadian archival institutions into the practice of acquiring material for geographical area. The Public Archives of Canada has developed a comprehensive records management programme and has contributed to the training of many archivists throughout the country with an Archives Course since 1959 when other institutions were not providing archival education. Their assistance to the academic community, especially to learned societies, has been immeasurable. Without the Public Archives, the *Canadian Union List of Manuscripts* would probably not have been completed. Its staff visited provincial archives and other institutions to fill out returns for those institutions which could not or would not answer. Further praise could be lavished upon the Public Archives but why shock its archivists, who are much more accustomed to criticism from Canadian archivists outside the hallowed walls. More appropriate is it to forecast the demise, and even question the need of the Public Archives' Manuscript Division, as organizations with records of national significance begin to realize that they should establish their own archives and as regions place greater emphasis on the importance of material created in a particular area actually staying there.

Although the Public Archives staff have a great amount of archival talent and the proposed Extension Branch programmes would give Canadian archives much needed funds and services, it is inappropriate for a federation such as the Dominion of Canada. The authors of the Report could not have foreseen the autocratic, heavy-handed federal attempts for constitutional change that would force provinces to guard their established provincial rights. It is unlikely that the provinces would agree or the federal government would desire to encroach at this time into another area, that of culture and heritage, which is primarily a provincial responsibility. So, let us scrap the Extension Branch idea as it does not concur with the direction in which the country is moving and spend more time pursuing the suggestions of the ACA Executive as to how \$2.5 million might be pumped into the Canadian archival system.

With the Public Archives shot down, we still need to find an institution that will provide leadership toward the development of a co-operative regional system of archives. The ACA Executive seems to believe that the responsibility and direction should be led by provincial archives, regardless of the archival patterns that have emerged in different provinces. Why should the Provincial Archives lead such a programme in Southern Alberta when the Glenbow-Alberta Archives are well-respected and longer established? However, let us assume that the Provincial Archives will take the lead in this endeavour. After all, their mandate has been, in many cases, to provide services on a provincial basis comparable to the Public Archives services federally. At least British Columbia has an archives advisor who holds workshops and assists to some degree various persons who are involved in preserving historical papers and records throughout the province.

Although the Association of British Columbia Archivists has held some sessions on archival collections policy and canvassed its members concerning the archival acquisition policies of their institutions, the implementation of the first recommendation requires an initial meeting between all institutions preserving historical records in the province. Such a meeting should require participating institutions to discuss their collecting policies and evaluate their overall programs and priorities. During discussions, the institutions will probably comment upon the strengths and weaknesses in various areas of acquiring records and papers. No doubt, someone will mention that several surveys conducted by individual researchers and the Business Archives Committee of the Society of American Archivists over the past 25 years have documented the failure of modern business firms to systematically preserve their historically significant records and ask whether B.C. is an exception to the norm. Unfortunately, it is not. This is especially true of firms in the older business districts of Vancouver that are either folding or moving. Unless the businesses or a researcher aware of historical records contact an archives, the material is destroyed. Archivists just don't have time to knock on doors and look into the matter, particularly when most of the records would be of a bulky, smelly, and dirty nature. However, if the workload was shared among institutions involved in preserving those records, a survey of businesses was prepared, and the institutions involved would share the time in visiting various firms and discovering the availability of records, more valuable material would be saved. Of course, this type of co-operation can be avoided if the archives in the regions wish to rely upon the federal government's records survey held during the summer which was so secretive that one regional association was asked not to discuss the records survey at their annual general meeting.

Such a meeting should also discuss diffusion of records on a regional basis and the feasibility of filming key material. Every effort should be made to distribute the finding aids of one institution to those of another, especially on relevant material. It is impossible to estimate the priorities established and programmes coming out of such a conference until summaries of them are read in the *Bulletin*.

Will provincial archives throughout the country take the lead as suggested by the ACA Executive in calling a conference to discuss networking, establish common priorities and develop services, facilities and programmes of benefit to all? Or, is everybody just too busy. If such conferences are not called, the archivists will have chosen to ignore, in practice, the report's recommendations and continue life as is.

LAURENDA DANIELLS, University Archivist, University of British Columbia:

The section of the report dedicated to education summarizes fairly clearly the present state of archival education and outlines the types of training which the authors feel are essential for archivists. One hesitates to take issue with such a brief outline which deals with principles which are generally accepted by archivists, but although the report makes a good case for continuing education and graduate education for archivists, it is rather limited in its outlook. In particular the discussion of the master's degree in archival science make no mention of the program which is in place at the University of British Columbia and is scheduled to begin in 1981. In view of the fact that the program was widely discussed by members of the Association of Canadian Archivists and followed the *Guidelines* of the Association, it is surprising to see it ignored. Its very existence makes recommendation 9 of the report, if not redundant, at least in need of expansion. There is no question that funding and scholarships would be helpful to any university which creates new programs, but the methodology suggested — the creation of an Extension Branch of the Public Archives of Canada which could consider providing funds to assist in the establishment of a suitable master's course in each official language — seems a heavy-handed way of going about things now that the University of British Columbia has established a master's degree in archival studies.

DAVID LEONARD, Archivist, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, Northwest Territories:

For the most part, I am in agreement with SSHRCC Report which I regard as a most comprehensive first step in the attempted rectification of the problems affecting Canada's archives. Being only a year and a half old, our institution was not able to participate in the surveys compiled by the Consultative Group, nevertheless I have found during my short time here that practically all of the problems identified in the report had in some way either precluded the creation of an N.W.T. Archives until April 1979, or have adversely affected developments since.

On the subject of inter-relationships between archives, I heartily endorse the appeal for improved communication. I am particularly sensitive to the issue of acquisition jurisdiction. Due mainly to our late development and large geographical mandate, there is probably more archival material misplaced from this region than from any other in Canada. Consequently, I believe, and especially on a regional basis for all 'total' archives, that the acquisition mandates of the repositories should be clearly defined and recognized by all. Similarly, within the regions, archives networks should be developed with the relative collecting policies spelled out and duly respected. Although there is only one archives in the Northwest Territories, we fully intend to promote the creation of regional repositories outside Yellowknife which will receive our support.

To advance interarchives communication, I support the creation of a National Historic Records Commission, with representation from the different regions, as opposed to an extension of the PAC. I do however feel that PAC should function in a moderating, though not a directing, role in such a commission.

I agree with the Consultative Group's contention that the emphasis for archival development should be on a provincial basis, nevertheless I feel that the strong presence of PAC would best insure the primary objective of standardization. We must keep in mind the great disparities existing among the different provincial/territorial repositories in terms of size, holdings, users and jurisdiction. We should assume that similar disparities would exist among the provincial/territorial advisory boards. I would therefore endorse the proposal that the Dominion Archivist become the chairman of such a commission, but not divorced from his position as director of PAC. I would envision his role as something of an arbiter for the policies and programs initiated by the regional boards.

On recommendation #6, the formation of a Canadian Association of Archives, I do feel this would be unnecessary, particularly given the growing number of national associations (such as CHA, COHA, ACA, etc.) in which the major repositories are expected to participate. The staff shortages which most of us endure would not warrant active involvement in another organization which relates so closely to the ACA. What I recommend is that a forum be set up within the ACA in which representatives from the nation's archives may air the special concerns that are affecting their institutions. I feel the regional perspective can be covered by a continuation of the annual meetings of the Dominion, Provincial and Territorial Archivists.

GLENN LUCAS, Archivist, United Church of Canada on behalf of the Committee on Archives and History:

At a time when private archival institutions across the country are experiencing grave financial problems, the recommendations of the Report on Canadian Archives to the SSHRCC seem highly inappropriate. We must ask ourselves why large sums of public monies should be put forward to establish post-graduate archival science programs when the very existence of many institutions (future employers) is in jeopardy? The

large numbers of under-employed university graduates have already produced a glut of qualified teachers and librarians. Is it necessary to produce another highly specialized area of underemployment?

This problem is of particular interest to the Committee on Archives and History of the United Church of Canada. Churches, as other institutions must establish fiscal priorities, and the amount of money they have available for what is primarily a service to the academic community and the general public can take an embarrassingly low place on the ledger. The Central United Church Archives in Toronto has reached a major financial crisis. There will be a net deficit of \$36,000 in 1980 and a further deficit of \$35,000 in 1981. Funding from outside sources will be mandatory in 1981 if the operation is to continue. Otherwise the alternatives for the United Church Archives are: reduction of staff; reduction of hours to half time; or dispersal of the collection.

Faced with many situations such as this across Canada we find it difficult to understand how the academic training of more qualified archivists can be justified until there are more positions available. Even if such a program was aimed only towards persons already employed in archives, most private institutions could not afford to enroll their employees in extensive training courses. Only the larger institutions would benefit.

Although there are certain basic theoretical rules involved in archival science, it is a discipline that must be learned primarily on the job and only later refined in the classroom. Each institution has its own needs. The business and corporate fields, for example, favouring a records management emphasis, may be scared away by an overly academic approach. Any need for additional training can be adequately achieved through course additions to existing history, records management and library science programmes, and through the greater use of workshops and seminars.

At this point in time, before we start creating more archivists, let's make sure that we have financially stable archives in which to place them.

WILLIAM McKEE, Chief Archivist, on behalf of Glenbow-Alberta Institute Archives:

We at the Glenbow Archives have endeavoured to summarize our response to several of the recommendations contained in the Report to the SSHRCC by the Consultative Group on Canadian Archives, and where appropriate, to the reply of the Association of Canadian Archivists to that Report. We do not support the Report's recommendation to create an Extension Department of the Public Archives of Canada; we believe it would be preferable to create a National Archival Coordinating Commission concerning extension as proposed by the A.C.A.; the Commission would, in theory, ensure greater provincial control over the disposition of the suggested extension funds that would be granted to archives across Canada. We believe that in such a large and diverse country, it is preferable to encourage strong regional participation in the formulation of any national archival programmes. At the same time, we have a concern about the composition of any National Archival Coordinating Commission. In his letter of August 15, 1980, addressed to all provincial archivists, Mr. Haworth stated:

The A.C.A. is proposing a similar National Historical Records Commission composed of representatives from the A.C.A., A.A.Q., the Canadian Historical Association, the Association of Canadian Studies, the Dominion Archivist, representatives of provincial archives and federal government representatives. . . .

We believe that provincial representation in any such commission should not necessarily always come from each provincial archives, as the foregoing statement would propose. Where a provincial archives is not the single dominant archival agency in a province but operates in a field occupied by a number of other large repositories — such as occurs in

our own province — the responsibility for speaking on behalf of archives in the province, at Commission meetings, should be rotated between various repositories.

We support the Consultative Group's recommendation to establish a Canadian Association of Archives. While there is an ongoing need for an Association of Canadian Archivists, as an organization promoting the broad interests of the profession, there is a more specific need for a national organization to examine and articulate our institutional concerns. As long as any repository were free to join and attend the meetings of such an organization, then it would act as a useful national archival forum. Issues such as the creation of provincial archival networks, which must ultimately be discussed and implemented at an institutional level, could be examined by such an association.

We would also endorse the report's seventh recommendation, that the Canadian Conservation Institute increase its commitment to the conservation of our archival heritage. We find it difficult to reconcile the willingness of the A.C.A. to place a national archival conservation facility in the P.A.C., while it is unprepared to support a similar extension facility there. We recognize that the Canadian Conservation Institute has had severe budgetary restrictions imposed on it in recent times; this is an illness, however, from which no branch of government is immune. Witness for instance the recent deplorable cut in conservation staff at the Public Record Office in Britain. While the C.C.I. was established by the National Museums Corporation, and has, therefore, naturally responded primarily to the needs of museums and galleries, it has demonstrated a willingness to understand, investigate and assist the needs of archives across Canada. It therefore has much valuable experience in our field. It has a core of conservation scientists and paper conservators who are recognized in the profession for their knowledge of and experience with the work of restoring documents. What is required is funding, accommodation and staff for a more adequate archival conservation department within this existing agency. We believe that, particularly at this time of budgetary restrictions, the best and most realistic option is to encourage the expansion of an existing agency, rather than attempting to create a new National Archival Conservation Institute, under the P.A.C.

With respect to the report's ninth recommendation, we would agree that funds from the proposed Extension Branch of the P.A.C. — or a National Archival Coordinating Commission — should be provided to assist in the establishment and development of master's programmes in archival science in each official language. While the gradual improvement in archival standards that has occurred across this country in recent decades in the absence of such a programme suggests the need for such programmes is debatable, we do believe the profession and Canadian archives would benefit. Archival standards would no doubt continue to improve, as new recruits armed with much more theoretical training and practical experience enter the field. The profession could also expect greater respect from our colleagues in associated fields such as librarianship, records management and the study of history.

MIRIAM McTIERNAN, Territorial Archivist, on behalf of the Yukon Archives:

Basically, we are very pleased with the SSHRCC report and feel that it points out accurately the common concerns of archives across Canada.

In dealing with the data and statistics, we found some of the tables very useful. The tables that were broken down by budget group were especially interesting because we could see where our resources and facilities fitted in on the Canadian scene. Although we are aware of our own strengths and weaknesses, it was useful to be able to compare these with similarly funded programmes across Canada.

The recommendations that may have the greatest impact on the Yukon Archives are those which relate to networking and those aimed at the SSHRCC dealing with sabbatical leave grants. The report does not state whether we will be part of the B.C. and Alberta networks respectively. However, the development of networks representative of the various constituencies, i.e., government, business, religious and educational in any region, should be very beneficial not only to the archival system in a region but also it should be very useful in ensuring that local priorities are considered in any overall national scheme. Access to sabbatical grant monies may be one of the few means by which archivists in the north pursue their professional development. The small number of archival institutions coupled with the great expense of travel from the north means that archivists will require grants in order to be able to travel to outside archives to complete research projects.

We agree that the PAC needs a new legislative base and it is our understanding that this process is underway. However, we do not favour the Extension Branch concept because we feel that it would be too vulnerable to budget cuts and other priorities within PAC. We endorse the ACA proposal of a National Historic Records Commission. As mentioned previously, we favour the concept of representative provincial boards coordinated through a national body.

We also support ACA in its opposition to the Canadian Association of Archives. In addition to being discriminatory and duplicating some of ACA's services, we do not see budget limitations providing a homogeneous group and can foresee endless difficulties and problems in deciding the composition of the membership.

The Group's observations concerning education have special relevance here in the north. As I mentioned earlier, travel from the North is very expensive and thus beyond the capacity of most individuals and institutions. In this respect, the production of manuals and other similar publications would be of great value to people in isolated communities. We support recommendation #9 calling for the availability of post graduate education in both English and French. In addition, we feel that access to sabbatical grants may be especially useful to archivists north of 60 who wish to engage in professional development.

WILLIAM ORMSBY, Archivist of Ontario:

The Report could have significant implications for the Archives of Ontario provided sufficient new salary money can be obtained to staff a programme designed to provide the type of provincial leadership recommended in the Report. If this is not possible we will continue, as we have in the past, to provide on an ad hoc basis as much leadership and assistance to archives in the province as we are able to with the staff available. I cannot agree with the implication in the Report that some of the staff time necessary could be found through a reordering of priorities. In my opinion, a provincial archives must give first priority to providing archival service for its parent body, the provincial government; second priority must go to servicing the needs of its clients; and outreach in the form of leadership for an embryo provincial network cannot be given higher than third priority.

From the data presented in the Report, there are grounds for questioning whether either the provincial archives or the archives that would form the provincial networks are in a position to play the rolls suggested for them. If the networks were formed immediately, I doubt they would function very effectively.

For a number of reasons, I favour the alternative put forward by the executive of the A.C.A. to the proposal for an Extension Branch to be established in the Public Archives of Canada. The proposal for the creation of a National Records Commission and

Provincial/Territorial Advisory Boards appears to me to be the best mode of achieving significant results with resources that, at best, will be quite limited. The A.C.A. proposal puts the onus on provincial and territorial governments to appoint Advisory Boards and get on with the job of surveying archival needs and establishing priorities. Thus it places the centre of focus where most of the problems lie. Under the plan proposed by the Consultative Group, I fear that some provincial archives would be left to attempt a leadership role in the creation of provincial networks without any appreciable increase in their resources — the result in such cases would almost certainly be less than satisfactory. Under the A.C.A. executive's proposal, there is greater certainty of a thorough and accurate assessment of archival needs and provincial networks would develop naturally in the process. The American model appears to be working very well with much less money being spent on permanent staff than would be required to establish an Extension Branch at the Public Archives of Canada. Moreover, the Public Archives of Canada has, itself, expressed reservations regarding the creation of an Extension Branch.

I cannot agree with the Consultative Group's recommendation for the creation of a Canadian Association of Archives. In my opinion such a body would be too large to accomplish very much and it could appear to compete with the A.C.A. as the voice of the archival community in Canada. Such an association could not take on the functions of the Dominion-Provincial-Territorial Archivists meetings — these meetings would continue to be necessary whether there was such an association or not.

The Report quite rightly makes the point that provisions for the education of archivists in Canada are totally inadequate but it fails to establish a set of priorities necessary to remedy the situation. By discussing the need for continuing education in the form of workshops seminars and manuals ahead of a Master's programme in archival science, it seems to imply that continuing education is more important. In my opinion, top priority should go to establishing the Master's programme so that the archival profession can be put on a comparable basis with other professions. In addition, I question whether the proposed Extension Branch at the Public Archives of Canada is the most appropriate source for financial assistance to establish such a programme. Are there no precedents which might suggest other more logical sources for federal financial assistance?

ALAN RIDGE, Provincial Archivist of Alberta in unofficial reply to the ACA President (printed by permission):

I am answering in my capacity as an ordinary member of the Association of Canadian Archivists and not as Provincial Archivist of Alberta. The essence of the Wilson Report has been given to my Deputy, but no official stance has yet been taken on the subject.

I appreciate the reluctance of the Public Archives of Canada to encourage the establishment of an Extension Branch, and I am also cheered by their favourable reception of a concept similar to the NHPRC. I do not altogether see why the establishment of such a commission would have to be part and parcel of national archives legislation. This has stalled so often in the past that if that route is chosen I have one real fear — that the Commission would never get off the ground. Is there any good reason why the Commission should not be established as an independent statute, to be managed by the Secretary of State?

While I can understand the relationship between the National Commission and provincial advisory boards, I do foresee some difficulty in defining the relationship of these provincial boards to the existing governmental authorities in each province endowed with a mandate for archives preservation. In order that the Ministers responsible for archives across the country may be adequately briefed, I would like to suggest that the

NHPRC idea be brought to their attention for discussion, not only at the Conference on Canadian Historical Resources, but also at such meetings as those which Cultural Ministers hold from time to time. Every case must be taken not to antagonise the provincial components.

One further point, do you not think it would be useful and politic to include a representative of ARMA on the National Commission?

Finally, I should mention that at one time the Dominion, Provincial and Territorial Archivists Conference was in favour of a National Congress being held to discuss and plan follow up action on the Wilson Report. This would have the advantage of bringing together keepers, owners and users of archives and also of providing some P.R. and ballyhoo for the whole enterprise. Could this be borne in mind by the ACA when negotiations are being held with the Secretary of State?

STEPHEN SPEISMAN, Director, Toronto Jewish Congress/Canadian Jewish Congress Ontario Region Archives:

The SSHRCC report *Canadian Archives* is a refreshing change; at last we have a lucid statement of the problems of Canadian archival institutions and a set of recommendations offered from a point of view other than that of government. My reservations about certain of the recommendations coincide largely with those of the ACA executive as outlined in the June 1980 *Bulletin*, especially with regard to Recommendations 1-5.

Success in the implementation of these recommendations and in the formation of a system of amicable cooperation between Canadian archives will depend to a substantial degree on the willingness of the PAC and the various Provincial archives to eschew the "total archives" philosophy. Our society has progressed beyond the stage when that approach was necessary or desirable; the legitimacy and territoriality of local and non-government institutions must now be recognized.

From this it follows that the role of the PAC and Provincial archives within the proposed system must be one in which they can contribute in a positive way to the achievement of our common goals without dominating the system either through the unilateral setting of priorities and standards, or by ensconcing the Dominion Archivist as president of a National Archival Coordinating Commission.

The proposed ACA amendments to the recommendations, therefore, are ones with which I heartily concur.

MICHAEL SWIFT, Director General, Archives Branch on behalf of the Public Archives of Canada:

The official reaction of the Public Archives of Canada to the Task Force Report was one of gratification. A major report of this kind, dealing with the state of archives in Canada must be looked upon as a milestone in the history of archival development in this country. Not only does the Report contain a wealth of material concerning the state of archives in Canada at this time, but from the point of view of the Public Archives it is also very timely. As many people are aware, the Public Archives is in the process of preparing new legislation governing the operations of Canada's National Archives. The legislation has not been revised since 1912 and the appearance of the Task Force Report at this particular time has proved very beneficial to the PAC in the examination of its role and mandate. It is the reaction of the Public Archives that the general goals to be pursued as outlined by the Task Force Report are sensible and deserving of strong support. The Public Archives is not in agreement with all of the detailed recommendations

relating to the achievement of these goals, but it certainly does support the overall objectives as outlined by the Task Force Report.

There are a number of recommendations in the Task Force Report which relate directly to the Public Archives of Canada. It would be useful to discuss these briefly and to outline the reaction of the Public Archives to the recommendations:

Recommendation No. 1

— relates to the re-evaluation of overall programmes with a view to balancing traditional activities with new initiatives designed to provide leadership and cooperation. This recommendation is most appropriate at a time when the Public Archives of Canada is reviewing its legislation. As a part of the process of producing a discussion paper on legislation, the archives will certainly review its overall programmes and examine closely the question of the role as the National Archives. In addition, during the coming year it is the intention within the Archives Branch to systematically review programmes and, in connection with the preparation of new legislation, to try to define more carefully what are the priority activities of the different archival divisions. This will undoubtedly be a difficult exercise but a necessary one nonetheless.

Recommendation No. 3 and a number of the subsequent recommendations

— relate to the establishment of a new extension branch in the Public Archives of Canada. It is recommended that this Branch take on the responsibility for administering a number of services including consulting, information, the administration of a grants programme, the funding of a graduate level educational programme in archives and the administration of a security information service. Although the objectives to be achieved by the Branch are certainly supportable, the Public Archives does not feel that the establishment of another Branch within the institution is the most effective way of achieving those aims. It seems unlikely at this time that the federal government would support a grant and funding role for the Public Archives of Canada. While a number of the activities proposed for this new branch could certainly be carried on by the Public Archives, it is not considered necessary to establish a new branch to oversee these functions. Furthermore, it seems more realistic to suggest that the administration of a grants program be carried on by one of the agencies which already carries out operations in that field.

Recommendation No. 4

— proposes that the Public Archives of Canada amend its legislation. The process of amending the legislation has been going on for some time. A discussion paper on the subject is presently being prepared and it is hoped that new legislation can be drafted and ready for Parliament within the next year.

Recommendation No. 6

— suggests the formation of a Canadian Association of Archives to provide a forum for archival institutions in Canada to meet and solve mutual problems. The Public Archives of Canada is generally sympathetic to the idea of having a forum in which archival institutions can discuss and resolve their problems. This already occurs to a limited extent with the annual meeting of the Dominion, Provincial and Territorial Archivists. Other problems of primary concern to institutions are presently dealt with either by the ACA or the AAQ, but there are obvious limitations on discussions of that kind in a forum of a professional association where the individuals attending such meetings do not officially represent their institutions. At the same time, the Public Archives is concerned that the professional associations not be adversely affected, or that their role not be limited by the formation of another archival association in the country. In summary, the Public Archives is willing to follow a consensus on this matter of the formation of an association of institutions. Perhaps there can be found some way in which the desired objectives can be reached by means of the creation of an appropriate mechanism within the associations which already exist.

Recommendation No. 12

- proposes that all archival organizations establish guidelines to clearly define which records belong to the institution and which records belong to individuals. The Public Archives of Canada strongly supports that recommendation and is attempting to establish very clear guidelines on that matter in new archives legislation as it affects institutions of the federal government and individuals who are employed in one manner or another by the Crown.

Recommendations 13 and 15

- deal with the problems of restricting the export from Canada of archival records. Admittedly the cultural property import and export act does not adequately cover all aspects of the export from Canada of archival material. As indicated by the report of the Symons Commission, this is a problem which has serious implications for historical research in Canada and as such, it is a problem which will not have an easy solution. In an effort to begin discussions toward a solution of this problem, the Public Archives of Canada intends to raise the matter in its discussion paper on new archives legislation. Whether it is a matter which can be, or should be, regulated solely by the Dominion Archivist and the Archives Act is a question which will have to be resolved as a part of the legislative process.

A number of Recommendations touch upon the subject of archival education in Canada

- it is difficult to treat adequately this subject in the space allowed here, but it can be stated briefly that the Public Archives of Canada is anxious to see the development of graduate level archival programmes in Canadian universities. The Public Archives has attempted to provide some leadership in this matter over the years, but it is generally agreed that the matter of formal archival education should be carried on in the universities. The role of the Public Archives in this matter should be limited to the provision of training and development opportunities for its own staff, as well as the provision of development experiences for other archivists by means of the sponsorship of conferences, seminars and study groups on matters of specific interest to archivists in various fields of activity. It is unlikely that the Public Archives will be placed in a position where it can provide funding for university level education. It should be possible, however, to encourage the existing granting agencies to place more emphasis on the funding of archival education at the university level in Canada.

HUGH TAYLOR, Provincial Archivist of Nova Scotia:

This is a most useful report which, if it covers some ground already familiar to archivists, provides an excellent introduction to the Canadian archival scene for those unfamiliar with our profession. There is plenty of ammunition here for those defending budget submissions and strengthening underfunded operations.

The recommendations are clearly and logically developed and are a response to trends in the development of archives not only in this county but world-wide; the technology of the information environment makes decentralization, networking, and all that flows from them an inevitable progression. The early stages of *Recommendation 1* have already been implemented; the role of provincial archives has been changing over the last few years; the local archival associations have met a need to break down regional solitudes and, if some of these are not active as they were, it is because we are not as thin on the ground or as lonely as we used to be. Increasingly the province is becoming the basis of regional activity and the Consultative Group was correct in basing its findings on this assumption. Already the necessary climate for the flowering of *Recommendation 2*

exists. However, there is perhaps the need for a note of warning: the Report addresses itself to the institutional definition of archives and the reasons for this are clearly stated. There is however some danger in losing sight of archivists and archival materials if too great an emphasis is placed on the organization.

Throughout our long history as the profession which “keeps” the record, we have learnt to live without elaborate organizational structures and this has tended to enhance our special relationship with depositors and users and may reflect the uniqueness of the material in our care. Our effectiveness is not always the result of efficiency in the purely mechanical or bureaucratic sense. This does not mean that we should sigh for a world of quill pens and handwritten repertoria but automation must be used to increase our time for human interaction and not decrease it through involvement with over complex and sophisticated systems. The Group has recognized (p. 31) the nature of small archives in Canada many of which are content to operate in this way; this is part of the Canadian pattern; a “cottage industry” may be perfectly valid and this is certainly the Nova Scotia experience. There is of course the matter of standards and we should not assume that all small archives should survive forever, but this kind of decentralization is very much a part of the heritage movement which Heritage Canada should be encouraged to recognize. In fairness the Group’s concept of a comprehensive system is quite broadly defined in Chapter IV; we should avoid anything too tightly articulated and we must somehow come to terms with the historic mandate of the Public Archives of Canada to acquire in the private sector, though this mandate may need some modification in the light of provincial claims.

The Group’s institutional approach is partly guided by the strong Canadian predilection for government-sponsored archives which grew out of both the British and French traditions. This can however be rather deceptive, for the strength and growth of government archives has been less in collective statutory power which is often (intentionally) very general and discretionary; rather it lies in the energy and initiative of individual archivists. When we think of archival development in Canada we think for example of Doughty, Lamb, Harvey and Turner; indeed, the Group recognizes this in the way the historical background is presented in the Report (pp 20-21). Rather than form an association of archives we should strengthen the expertise and authority of archivists who need to sell their programs to government with all the skill they can master. It is the individual archivists who will be responsible for the success or failure of provincial networks and a comprehensive system, and the most effective may not always be the heads of the principal repositories. This is why archivists opt so strongly for the post-graduate degree and the best possible archival education. The section on education is incidentally well presented and provides useful guidelines for the future along a course which is already being charted by the University of British Columbia and by other initiatives in the A.C.A.

Undoubtedly, *Recommendation 3* concerning an Extension Branch of the PAC is the most controversial and is meeting with little support. To some extent it is a logical outcome of the institutional approach discussed above. A Canadian version of the National Historical Publication and Records Commission in the United States as suggested in the A.C.A. Executive Response would undoubtedly be preferable bearing in mind the following:

1. The NHPRC has worked well on the whole, but vigilance must always be exercised to ensure that the permanent secretariat does not usurp the policy making powers of the National Commission.
2. Both the Commission and Provincial territorial Advisory Boards should be as representative as possible.
3. The method of appointment of all these members will require very careful thought.

4. Provincial Archivists could perhaps be convenors in their provinces but the Provincial Boards should be free to elect their own chairpersons. I am all in favour of initiatives and initial co-ordination by Provincial Archivists but it is important that we do not appear to run the Boards permanently as of right. Moreover there might also be a conflict of interest if one of us was on the Commission and also chairperson of a Provincial Board.

5. The Commission should seek to fashion a national policy in terms of priorities and programmes but care must be taken to avoid homogeonising these across the country. In some areas national policy may mean recognizing and accepting provincial priorities.

6. It is important that Board members receive at least travel expenses where necessary otherwise they may cease to be representative.

7. The list of examples of what might be funded by the Commission (p. 10) covers the ground and compares well with the 7 areas of the NHPRC. The Commission would do well to be cautious of elaborate surveys of material not in archives because of potential migration and dispersal.

8. Matching grants can often make funding go much further. The arguments used in the Report against this approach do not seem very strong and the grants could be distributed for a wide range of projects within an agreed comprehensive national program.

For the rest, the Group has produced a report and recommendations which I believe bring into focus the aspirations of Canadian archivists, with practical ways of realizing them.

TERRY THOMPSON, General Synod Archivist, Anglican Church of Canada:

My remarks must be somewhat tentative for I have found that, due most often to the traditional summer lag, many of the religious archivists I talked to had not yet digested the report. Surveying our diocesan archives, I discovered that many had not even heard about it and so I have ordered more copies for an extended mailing.

In its report the Consultative Group on Canadian Archives acknowledged the special case of church archives. If these usually small and often voluntarily staffed archives are to receive help it must be specialized. As the report noted "Tax incentives will not help, nor do all churches willingly accept public grants." (p. 93). Little has been done to widen the definition of a public archives to include non-governmental institutions. Partly, this has been because religious or church archivists have presented themselves as church members first and archivists second often in a defensive way rather than as members of a larger archival profession. Likewise, perhaps mindful of the historical debate over the respective roles of church and state, government agencies have been reluctant to give religious institutions the status of public bodies based on the service they offer. This question needs continued study.

Another area which the report only commented obliquely on and which affects religious archives is the role and training of volunteer staff. This is also a major communications problem as often these people have no ongoing contact with professional associations or with public institutions. The effective development and maintenance of standards for small archives lies often with these people and their expertise is often untapped. In this regard, those proposals in the report which stress the development of provincially based networks should help the development of more thorough networks of communications. However, this has to be a two-way street with the smaller institutions opening themselves up to the system through more active participation.

It might have been more consistent if the report had proposed that the Extension Branch be funded as a foundation. In this case, it could cooperatively draw on various professionals' expertise — perhaps on a contract basis.

Church archivists also see several problems with the report's proposal for an Association of Canadian Archives. Among these are the question of representation. Representation determined by budget would mean severe distortions. For example, since there is no national Roman Catholic archives with paid professional staff, and since most diocesan archives are run by clergy on modest stipends or by volunteers, it is conceivable that this denomination would not be represented. At the other end of the scale of population it is doubtful whether any of the smaller Protestant or Orthodox groups would be represented, although these groups' concerns might provide a good counterbalance to continued centralism. In addition, there is some question as to the viability of non-governmental institutions being represented on a body whose agenda would normally consist of issues related to the development of government policy.

3rd BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

23-26 MAY 1981

AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY OF ARCHIVISTS

In 1988 it will be 200 years since the British Government sent its first fleet of convicts and guards to set up the first European settlement in Australia. To mark this date, Australian Historians have planned a series of volumes of historical studies, each based on 50 years of political and social development. The conference programme has been planned with the co-operation of this Bicentennial History Project.

The Programme will explore the wealth of material in archival and other institutions in Australia, and the challenges and problems in making this more widely known and used. It will give particular attention to ethical and practical problems that Archivists face in their efforts to protect, preserve and disseminate information. The object of the conference is to draw Archivists and users of archives into closer discussion.

Archivists from many parts of the world are custodians of records relating to significant aspects of Australian history. Records of Church missions and settlements, the 'Gold Rushes', Australia's overseas contingents in China in the nineteenth century, and in South Africa and Europe in the twentieth century are examples of records held outside Australia that are important for the writing of Australian history.

Australian Archivists would be delighted to welcome overseas colleagues who are custodians of any relevant records, or who are interested in exchanging views on the problems facing both Archivists and users.

Come to MELBOURNE! If you can, contact Anne Green, Conference Committee, Australian Society of Archivists, 242 Danks Street, Albert Park, Victoria, 3206, Australia.