

The other aspect of note is the informational value of items on the organisation and development of Québec archival agencies. Gilles Héon's description of the regionalisation of the *Archives nationales du Québec* bears consideration as a means of coming to grips with the inevitable centralising tendency of archival provision by suggesting the growth of "research laboratories" focussed on regional communities as specified by the government. Similarly, the Québec City archivist's review of municipal records and François Beaudin's three articles on notarial, ecclesiastical and university archives deserve a reading. Unfortunately, none of these rise much above a statement or preliminary survey and plainly they need further investigation. Critical assessment is missing or lamentably weak—a fact explained by the eagerness perhaps of the Association des archivistes du Québec to declare itself and its concerns without delay. Robert Garon has a few pages on the AAQ's objectives. Lack of analysis and judgement is displayed in the failure to set this publication in perspective, historically and archivally, and in reproducing contributions like Daniel Hickey's on the infamous "L'Affaire des manuscrits" which is distinctly thin and abrupt. The implications of this affair in terms of archival jurisdiction and administrative clout are far reaching enough in and out of the province to engage more than passing registration.

With the appearance of *Archivistique québécoise*, Canada now has two unsatisfactory compilations on archival issues. Though the quality of the summer institute papers from the annual program of the Public Archives of Canada/Archives Section (Canadian Historical Association) is higher, the papers no more constitute a real scrutiny of Canadian archival endeavour in English than Beaudin's volume does for Québec. That they both derive from courses attempting to provide a measure of archival education is both a comment upon the nature of this activity up to the present time and a spur to improvement. Plainly the need is recognised. It is profoundly hoped that the joint endeavour of the two professional archives associations, the ACA and the AAQ, will catapult the preparation of a work comprehensively conceived, deeply researched, critically adept and suitably published. Until that happy day arrives, works of the limitations of *Archivistique québécoise* must be received only with regret.

Gordon Dodds  
Archives of Ontario

**Proceedings of an International Seminar on Automatic Data Processing in Archives.** Editors: LIONEL BELL and MICHAEL ROPER. London: H. M. Stationery Off., 1975. Pp. 349. £8.50.

At last we have the *Proceedings* of the international seminar on automatic data processing in archives held from 26 August to 1 September 1974 at

White House in Sussex, England. The purpose of the seminar was to provide a forum for a mutually beneficial exchange of views on automatic data processing (ADP) applications in order to create an awareness of "possible advantages and pitfalls of ADP in archives". Co-sponsored by UNESCO, the International Council on Archives and the Public Record Office, it attracted 47 participants from 27 countries, a demonstration of growing world-wide interest among archivists in ADP uses. Both the editors and the publisher are to be congratulated for making the fruits of this pioneering conference available to a wider audience in published form.

The formal presentations and discussions published deal with archival treatment of computer produced records and the various applications of ADP to manage office routines, to control filing systems and inventories, and to assist in the preparation of indexes and information retrieval systems for public service. A short review of library experience in the field rounds out the book and, almost as an afterthought, a discussion of the role of archivist as project manager is tacked on as a conclusion. Flow charts, sample entries, indexes, representative forms and diagrams illustrate many presentations to great advantage. In keeping with the working nature of the seminar all papers are in the form of reports. Emphasis in all cases is placed on the reasons for a project's success, or often more significantly on the reasons for its failure thereby enhancing the text's credibility and augmenting its value as a handbook. Most of the papers and projects presented have not been published previously.

With such a cornucopia of subjects there are bound to be papers to suit every interest. Five presentations stand out as first rate examples of project reports and can be commended to would-be project managers and neophyte data-archivists. M. R. Roper's "Computers for Archives Management in the Public Record Office" is a meticulous and copiously illustrated outline of the Public Record Office's PROSPEC system for management of record productions, references, location and use. Although PROSPEC has been reported upon in its formative stages this contribution augments and completes the 1972 *Journal of the Society of Archivists* report. W. Buchmann's "Compilation and Evaluation of Computerized Data Concerning Persons and Subjects in Archival Sources" is a revealing frank treatment of the experience of the Federal Republic of Germany with machine assisted archival techniques. Of the several papers on indexing projects, Dr. Maria Pia Mariani's splendid presentation "Information Retrieval by GOLEM II: Report of An Experiment" and the vigorous discussion on the philosophy of retrieval systems which follows stand out. For those interested in data archives by far the most advanced work is being done in North America and M. E. Carroll's "The Public Archives of Canada's Experience in Establishing a Machine Readable Archives", a tight, clean and cogent presentation, is commended to all archivists contemplating involvement in that field. Finally, R. G. A. Chesterman's "The Operational Development

of ARCHAIC in the East Sussex Record Office 1970-1974'' is particularly pertinent reading for archivists of smaller institutions as a case study of ADP applications in a non-national archives.

Given the international aspect of the seminar and the revolutionary nature of the technology under discussion substantial difference of opinion could be expected. Long standing problems such as the dispute over whether machine readable records are archival were rather quickly dismissed. More debate was generated by questions of suitable training for archivists in the new technology. Profound divergence emerged on questions of the philosophy of information retrieval, on comparative values of retrospective versus on-going automated inventory projects and on the value of prepared software packages.

Surprisingly there was general agreement on several points. Each report almost without exception emphasizes that archivists must carefully analyse priorities and completely understand functions of manual systems before entertaining automated procedures. ADP must be carefully balanced against conventional manual methods and "there is inevitably a shadowy no-man's land where immediate benefits may be marginal, but long term benefits considerable" (p. 176). Cost benefits should not be confused with access benefits the reports argue, and contrary to popular myth, automatic data processing often requires more staff with higher skills than relevant manual techniques. Intelligent training appears to be the key to successfully planned and implemented automatic procedures.

There are disappointments in this volume. Some contributions, however appropriate for oral presentation, lack clarity, precision and real subject development when put in print. Spontaneity of discussion, a major reason for the seminar format completely disappears with publication. What we have is something between collected essays and direct oral transcription lacking both their virtues. Puzzling editorial inconsistencies in placement of footnote references, name entries and explanations of ADP terminology mar what is overall a tightly organized and logical presentation of topics. At £8.50, this is an expensive book. Published in A-4 paper size, a very uncomfortable bookshelf format, the *Proceedings* is paperbound and will not take heavy reference use. However functional, the selectric type face printed by off-set is less than pleasing. Unfortunately, careless collation on the part of the printers resulted in the inclusion of pages 197-303 twice in the finished volume.

International differences in both archival practices and information retrieval philosophies are evident. There is no agreement on international documentation standards, hardware or software compatibility, or even appraisal standards and it is uncertain whether such agreement would be beneficial. Certainly exchanges on these matters should be encouraged but perhaps more productively at the national or regional level where seminars

could be tailored to specific needs. While recognizing the virtues of the conference participants recommended that future seminars be specifically designed for either novices or advanced practitioners in the ADP-archives field. Training is undoubtedly the key to future development of ADP in archives and, to be successful, such training should be somewhat more sophisticated than the methods employed by Mr. Rosenkrantz (NARS) who placed an archivist and a programmer in a room together and told them to learn from each other (p. 170). Although international standards for education in this field are probably far in the future, seminars and publications such as this are significant and useful contributions. Archivists should welcome this volume of project histories highlighting the problems and pitfalls, but most of all, the great promise for ADP in archives.

Barbara Lazenby Craig  
Archives of Ontario.

**Actes du IV<sup>e</sup> Congrès Annuel de l'Association des Archivistes du Québec. Archives; Cahier no 1.** Québec: Association des archivistes du Québec, 1975. Pp. 96.

*Archives, Cahier no. 1* consists of the proceedings of the annual meeting of the Association des archivistes du Québec, held in Québec City, 16-17 May 1975. In the introduction Guy Diné claims that this volume is a "compte rendu fidèle," but in striving for that actuality it appears that the volume, ranging as it does from brief summaries to verbatim reports, has bypassed the editing phase.

The proceedings include the annual meeting, business meeting and committee reports as well as the papers given on technical subjects. The proceedings of the meetings are recorded succinctly, with considerable detail given to the financial proceedings (even a facsimile of the auditor's report is included). Both the retiring and the incoming presidents made statements of considerable interest, but instead of these statements being featured, they appear as the final items in the volume just as they were the final elements of the agenda. And M. Donald Guay of the Ministère des affaires intergouvernementales gave what must have been a lively key note speech: "Les Archives, ça vaut l'coup!"

From this volume emerges a clear picture of the general meeting, but not of the activities. It is difficult to render as a formal presentation the substance of a round table or a workshop, but some accounts are so brief as to appear to be notes taken on the back of an envelope. While it may be suitable to report some sessions in point form, in this volume it has been overdone. The policy report on decentralization of the Archives nationales is disappointingly brief. Fortunately, not all reports are so brief; the round