

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

by

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In proposing to the Editor that it might be pleasant to foster a custom whereby each Chairman submitted a brief statement for publication in the *Canadian Archivist* at least once during his term in office, I realized that we were on the brink of inaugurating a tradition - and it has long been noted by wiser men than your elected officers of the day that while tradition is a wise counsellor it can be a dangerous master. At the risk (which I think is relatively slight) of introducing a "dangerous master" into the society of archivists I would like to think that this tradition could be useful even if it does not always exactly brim over with wisdom.

During the 1966 Annual Conference the Section will be giving time and thought to its future as a professional body and to the training needs of young people seeking employment in Archives offices. The two topics are completely interdependent. The Council of the Canadian Historical Association is interested in the Section's work and is planning talks with its representatives during the conference to decide on our future relationship. I would think that while the Canadian Historical Association would be happy to continue to provide a forum for record owners, record keepers and record users to meet together, it would prefer that a strictly professional organization should stand on its own feet. If the majority of practising archivists feel that the time is ripe for establishing a professional association, this can be arranged. In any event, however, we shall have to decide what constitute professional standards and this takes us to the question of training.

Is it sufficient to hold *ad hoc* accelerated courses as we have done hitherto, or is it now the time for laying down a generally acceptable course of training provided by an institution of higher learning and leading to a degree or diploma in Archives Administration and Records Management? In the business of managing and appraising records and in recommending their disposition, an archivist should be *primus inter pares*, whose voice is listened to with respect. Those conflicts between archivists and their superiors (or committees) when the institution and experience of the former are pitted against the seniority and business training of the latter, will surely more often end in triumph for the archivist if he is recognized as a qualified specialist - qualified academically as well as by nature and by experience. In the age of the technocrat everyone in administrative circles, it seems, needs a paper testifying to his qualifications (regrettable though it may be) and the archivist ignores this trend at his peril. By arranging for the regular academic instruction of potential archivists we shall help to foster the proper recognition of an archivist's position in administrative circles. As a result of our efforts we could well hope that in the course of time the point of the following comment, once made by an archivist about a particularly difficult committee, would be lost upon a new generation of archivists: "Why do they hire a watchdog if they are going to do the barking themselves?"

A NEW LOOK

With this number, the *Canadian Archivist* comes of age with its first letterpress edition. While limited finances made it necessary to use 8 point type, we hope to graduate to the larger 10 point type by next year. For our long-suffering members, we realize this is the third size change in four issues, but we hope it will be the last. The first two numbers were mimeographed on standard 8½x11 paper. Last year we produced a multilith issue and our size was limited by plate sizes and finances. With this number we have standardized our publication so that its measurements are similar to those of the *Canadian Historical Review*.

—The Editor.