

Beaver House. It was not possible to use the elevators between Monday and Friday to move the boxes to the loading platform because sales were being held in September. The eight containers with approximately 120 tons of Archives were loaded on four consecutive Saturdays and Sundays and sent two to a ship, one week apart. The first container was unloaded in Winnipeg on 30 September 1974, and by 1 November the complete collection was under the roof and in the care of the Manitoba Archives. The only casualty was a damaged cover on a book of post plans.

The Manitoba Archives Building officially opened on 17 April 1975. Six months later, researchers from Rhode Island to San Francisco, from Québec City to Vancouver Island, had consulted the HBC records.

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## **The Department of the Interior Project**

In 1936 the federal government abolished the Department of the Interior. Formed in 1873, it had been a major instrument for promoting national development both in administering the natural resources of the prairie provinces and, from 1893 until 1917, in supervising the movement of immigrants to Canada. In 1930, after the signing of the resource transfer agreements, Interior was greatly demoted in prestige and many of its best employees were offered jobs by the prairie governments. Nevertheless, the Department did retain a number of important functions for which it was less well known. Indeed, it remained a major federal agency for promoting scientific research, undertaking national resource planning and conservation, encouraging tourism, administering northern Canada, and mapping and surveying the nation. The Department of the Interior was replaced in 1936 by a revamped organization within a new Department of Mines and Resources which amplified these remaining functions into major national programs. The present Departments of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Energy, Mines and Resources, and Environment can trace most of their duties and responsibilities back to modest origins within the old Department of the Interior.

Since Interior played such a large and multi-faceted role in national development during a formative period in Canadian history, the Public Records Division of the Public Archives of Canada has started a three-year program to locate, inventory, list and publicize the existence of the Department's extant records. The project is being carried out by four members of PRD's Resource Section: Bryan Corbett, Peter Gillis, Bill

Oppen and Terry Cook. Their first task, of course, will be to set their own house in order. The variety of functions carried out by Interior poses many problems for the public record archivist. Immediately provenance becomes both complicated and clouded and this means that the record group concept is much more difficult to apply. Registry systems change and administrative continuity is often the only touchstone which can be used to identify major series of records so that they can be easily comprehended by researchers. The project participants have already begun to solve this problem by undertaking an exhaustive and comprehensive study of the various branches, agencies, programs and offices which at one time or another were part of the Department of the Interior. At the same time they are beginning to canvass headquarters and field offices in an effort to locate unscheduled files which originated in Interior.

The first stage of the project, which will last two years, has three objectives. First, it will provide definite information on what Interior files are still in the custody of the federal government and enable the Resource Section to undertake a more systematic approach to acquiring them. Second, it will enable the archivists involved to reorganize all the relevant record groups and slot new accessions into the appropriate areas more easily. Finally, all the inventories for the groups of records which have been established will be published and distributed free of cost to researchers.

When this first stage has been completed, the project's participants will produce a hand-book outlining the various branches and offices within Interior, including a resumé of the historical records available throughout the country for the study of their role and activities. Also included will be a general who's who of prominent and influential individuals within the Department and an analytical guide to the legislation which governed the duties and responsibilities of the Department of the Interior from 1873 until 1936. In the end, the Department of the Interior Project should produce a number of research aids which will both facilitate and promote the study of crucial but hitherto neglected aspects of resource development and land settlement throughout Canada by exposing to researchers the great wealth of information available in the files of what was a large, dynamic and, at times, a creative federal government agency.

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## **Records Management and Archives in Mexico**

As a result of a visit to Mexico in 1975 by the Dominion Archivist, Dr. W.I. Smith, the government of Mexico asked the Public Archives of Canada to