

steering committee was appointed: A. W. Tickner, Senior Archival Officer, NRC; Professor Bruce Sinclair, Director, Institute for the History and Philosophy of Science and Technology, University of Toronto; and panelists Ball, Franks and Guédon. Committee members Ball, Franks, Guédon and Tickner met at Queen's University six weeks later to begin planning for a national conference and workshops on the history of science and engineering in Canada. It is tentatively scheduled for Kingston in the autumn of 1978, and will deal in part with archival resources.

Norman R. Ball  
Science and Engineering Archivist  
Public Archives of Canada

## History of McGill Project

The History of McGill Project at McGill University has produced a computerized subject listing of the papers of Sir John William Dawson, educator and naturalist. Dawson, born at Pictou, Nova Scotia, in 1820, served as Superintendent of Education for the Province of Nova Scotia from 1850 to 1853, and as Principal of McGill University from 1855 to 1893. A prominent geologist of his period, he published more than five hundred books and articles on scientific subjects. He served as first president of the Royal Society of Canada and as president of both the British and American Associations for the Advancement of Science. Throughout his career he corresponded with leading scientists in Canada and abroad. He died at Montreal in 1899.

The subject listing will facilitate the work of researchers in the field of the history of McGill University, of education and of science. The listing has been designed also to serve other interests ranging from the development of Montreal and the implications of Confederation for English rights in Quebec to the growth of railways, and the evolution of nineteenth-century social life.

A copy of the index may be consulted by researchers in the McGill University Archives, 3459 McTavish Street, Montreal, Quebec H3A 1Y1, where the Dawson papers are stored. A complementary chronological listing is also available and an author-recipient listing to the Dawson letters is being planned for the near future.

John King  
McGill University

## FOCUS: The British Columbia Credit Union Archives

The Depression of the 1930s brought about a growth in co-operative organizations to provide members with services not available from local governments. One such co-operative was the Common Good Co-operative Association organized in British Columbia by a group of Burnaby residents and containing units for groceries, market gardening, lumbering and so forth.

In 1936, a member of the Common Good Co-op, Mildred Osterhout, learned about credit unions during a visit to Antigonish, Nova Scotia, and on her return, suggested that a unit be established by the Common Good Co-op. Credit union legislation was lacking in BC at this time and, fearing that it would be illegal to use the term "credit union," the members called the new organization the Common Good Co-operative Credit Unit No. 1. Because of a lack of capital, the initial unit grew very slowly and plans for expansion were dropped.

Co-op members and credit union "study groups" were meanwhile putting pressure on the province's Liberal government to introduce credit union legislation. Dorothy Steeves, a Co-operative Commonwealth Federation MLA, introduced private

member's bills in 1936 and 1937 which were defeated, but in the fall of 1938 the government introduced and passed the first Credit Unions Act. Drafted without consultation with people in the co-operative movement, the Act was a hodgepodge of the Societies, Companies and Co-operatives Acts and was to require major amendments over the years.

After the appointment of E.K. deBeck as Inspector of Credit Unions in May 1939, credit union study groups, savings and loan associations, and Workers' Aid Societies began to incorporate as credit unions. Although there is little doubt that the Common Good unit was the first credit union in BC, the first charter was issued to a group in Powell River and the second to the Amalgamated Civil Servants of Canada in Vancouver. Common Good, registered as CG, was granted the third charter. Although growth was very slow at first, increasing numbers of credit unions were incorporated in the late forties and fifties. In the latter part of the sixties some amalgamated in order to provide better service to members. Today there are 176 credit unions in BC with 269 offices throughout the province.

The credit union movement in BC is unique in many respects. There existed, for example, a provincial credit union organization before the first credit union was chartered. In 1940, the BC Credit Union Association was reformed as a League to enable it to join the American-based Credit Union National Association (CUNA). The BC Credit Union League was the first from outside the United States to join CUNA, and in a sense heralded the start of the international credit union movement. The next major step for the movement was the formation of the BC Central Credit Union, the credit unions' own credit union, which was incorporated in May 1944. In 1970, the BC Central Credit Union and the BC Credit Union League were merged to form the BC Central Credit Union.

At the BC Central Credit Union's annual meeting in 1976, a resolution establishing the Credit Union Archives was passed unanimously. The proposal suggested an initial two-year development project divided into three stages. The first stage was to consolidate the records of the provincial organizations and to survey the records of the individual credit unions. An oral history programme and visits to individual credit unions were to come next, followed by the establishment of the archives at the new BC Credit Union Centre, due to be completed in June 1978. To finance the project, it was agreed that a voluntary contribution be solicited from each credit union at the rate of three and one-half cents per adult member. The credit unions' support of the archives is shown by the fact that nearly twenty thousand dollars (of a possible twenty-three thousand dollars) have been received.

Work on the archives began in 1976. The first task was to inventory the records preserved by the earlier provincial organizations, the BC Credit Union League and the BC Central Credit Union. Their records include the minutes of the annual meetings and of the boards of directors prior to 1970; the correspondence of the League's managing directors, 1945, 1950-70, and of the managers of BC Central, 1948-70; correspondence with credit unions from both organizations; and the financial records, general ledgers and share cards of BC Central. There are in addition the minutes and correspondence of the Vancouver District and Co-operative Council, 1934-39, the correspondence and library of the BC Co-op Union (now dissolved) and some materials of individual board members. Photographs, artifacts, and annual meeting posters are also in the archives.

When a province-wide survey of the archival holdings of the individual credit unions was undertaken, it revealed reservations on their part to deposit records in the Credit Union Archives. The credit unions knew little about the purposes and benefits of an archives and were also concerned about the legality of removing the records from their registered offices. To deal with the latter reservation, blanket permission was obtained

from the two credit union supervisory bodies (the Superintendent of Credit Unions, Co-operatives and Trust Companies and the Credit Union Reserve Board) to allow the transfer of records from the credit union offices to the archives. The supervisory bodies also designated the Credit Union Archives as a depository for credit union records.

In order to increase support by credit unions for the project, extensive promotion has been carried out with generally good results. Regular articles are written for each issue of *Enterprise*, the magazine for BC credit union officers. Personal involvement is encouraged through requests for help in identifying photographs and for donations of historical materials.

Two audio-visual presentations have been prepared and others are being planned. The first, on the archives project, was shown at annual meetings of several credit unions in the spring of 1977. I attended these meetings to provide additional information about the project. The second audio-visual presentation, "BC Credit Unions: The Formative Years," was shown at the annual meeting of the BC Central Credit Union in 1977. It was well received and will be used at forthcoming credit union annual meetings and at orientation sessions for staff and members.

A list of the pioneers of the credit union movement compiled by long-term employees of BC Central provides the basis for the oral history programme. All of the people contacted so far have been willing to share their recollections of the "early days." Copies of tapes that are not restricted are available to researchers and copies will also be available through the Aural History Institute in Victoria, BC.

At present, the archives is located in Vancouver in an air-conditioned storage area three blocks from the BC Central Credit Union offices. When the new BC Credit Union Centre is completed, the archives will be moved to the new building. The storage space will be located in the basement near the computer complex so that the controlled environment can be shared by both areas and the research area will be located on the main floor adjacent to the foyer along with the organization's Resource Centre. Until the move, when the archives will be open during regular working hours, researchers may use the archives by appointment.

Although the aim of the project was to develop an archives prior to the move to the Credit Union Centre, its most significant impact has been in stimulating among credit union officers and members an awareness of their history.

Because information on other provincial credit union archives is not readily available, letters were sent to all of the other Leagues and Centrals in Canada requesting information on their archives. The following is a summary of the replies received.

The Brunswick Credit Union Federation does not have an archives, but annual reports and a small amount of material donated by chapters are retained and are available to researchers by appointment.

The Credit Union Federation of Alberta has kept annual reports, task force reports, quarterly publications, some correspondence and photographs, but no work has yet been done on the records.

The Fédération des caisses d'entraide économique du Québec has preserved its records and the newly created Service études/documentation is inventorying the material. At present the records are stored in several locations, but will eventually be consolidated. They are available for research upon approval.

The National Association of Canadian Credit Unions reported that, although there had been some discussion about setting up an archives for that organization, no plans have yet been formulated.

The Nova Scotia Credit Union League has preserved the correspondence of some of the early credit union leaders from the St. Francis Xavier University Extension Department and of the Credit Union Extension Bureau (which later became CUNA) relating to legislation, credit union inspectors and the organization of the League. This material and other more recent records are under the supervision of the assistant general manager and are available for researchers.

The Ontario Credit Union League does not maintain an archives but historical material is available in its Research Library and its published history, *To the Credit of the People*, by Ron Kenyon.

The Quebec Credit Union League (Ligue des caisses d'économie du Québec) holds the records of the original Quebec Credit Union League, the Quebec Central Credit Union and the Cendel Foundation. These records include founding documents, minutes, yearly financial statements and reports, merger documents and lists of affiliated credit unions. In addition, it has preserved the founding and merger documents and financial statements of affiliated credit unions as well as documentation on changes of name and bonds of association. This material is under the care of the League's Supervisor of Education and is kept in the library.

About five years ago the Saskatchewan Co-operative Credit Society began to collect archival materials. Minutes and other records of the antecedent organizations, the Credit Union League of Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Co-operative Credit Society, are preserved as are all major reports and correspondence of the general managers. Some of the material is stored in the library; the remainder is in the Corporate Secretary's office. The records are accessible to researchers.

The Terra Nova Co-operative Credit Society reported that nothing has yet been done about their records.

From these replies, it appears that the provincial credit union archives in Canada are not yet very well developed, nor are they actively engaged in giving their archival records the care they require to ensure that the story of the credit union movement is kept. For the time being, it is promising to see that the archival materials are being stored and are, as a rule, accessible to researchers.

Miriam McTiernan  
BC Central Credit Union Archives



### The Provincial Archives of New Brunswick

This year observes the tenth anniversary of its founding. To mark the occasion the Archives has published its first general inventory, *A Guide to the Manuscript Collections in the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick*. This inventory is offered for sale at a cost of \$3.00.

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