

There is of course nothing definitive about the five volumes to date and nor should they be unduly lauded. Yet, they come closer than anything previously written in providing authoritative guides to basic archives administration. It is to be hoped that the *Series* will expand in their afterglow.

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Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Joint Committee on Regulations and Other Statutory Instruments, nos. 13-67, 1975-76. Ottawa: Queen's Printer. (Text in English and French) Available from Printing and Publishing, Supply and Services Canada, 270 Albert St., Ottawa, K1A 0S9.

On 19 December 1974, the House of Commons referred the "Guidelines for Motions for the Production of Papers" and the subject matter of Bill C-225, "An Act respecting the right of the public to information concerning the public business," to the Standing Joint Committee on Regulations and Other Statutory Instruments. The Committee, with Senator Eugene Forsey and MP Robert McCleave as joint chairmen, then began a series of hearings to investigate all aspects of public access to government information at the federal level. The Committee called on individuals inside and outside government, including the sponsor of Bill C-225, Gerald Baldwin, MP for Peace River. The testimony and submissions presented between February 1975 and April 1976 have been printed in Issue Nos. 13 to 67 of the Committee's *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence*.

Several Issues of the *Minutes of Proceedings* hold special interest for archivists, either for their illumination of the broader aspects of the problem or for their concentration on questions of direct archival significance. The "insiders' " view is ably presented by Mitchell Sharp, then President of the Privy Council, and by two public servants, Gordon Robertson, Secretary to the Cabinet for Dominion-Provincial Relations, and D.F. Wall, a member of the Privy Council Office. Their testimony and the latter's report, "The Provision of Government Information," — which may be seen as a forerunner of Secretary of State Robert's discussion paper, *Legislation on Public Access to Government Documents*, published in June 1977 — are printed in Issue Nos. 13 and 32.

Among submissions from "outsiders," the testimony of Dr. Donald Rowat of Carleton University (Issue No. 15) and Professor Maxwell Cohen of McGill University (Issue No. 50) is of particular interest. Dr. Rowat is perhaps the first Canadian academic to address the question of access to government information, in two articles published in the *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* in 1965 and 1966. Professor Cohen, the author of *Secrecy and Foreign Policy*, gives a provocative and searching overview of the problems inherent in balancing the public's need for information and the government's need to operate with a degree of confidentiality.

On the archival side, Issue No. 61 prints the testimony of the Dominion Archivist, Dr. W.I. Smith. The members of the Committee showed a surprising interest in the role of the Public Archives of Canada in government information policy and implementation. Canadian archivists interested in access problems might do well to seek out this Issue and read Dr. Smith's testimony.

For some unknown reason, Canadian archivists missed a second opportunity to inform the Committee of archival concerns about access to government documents. On 30 March 1976, near the end of its deliberations, the Committee agreed to hear the views of the Association of Canadian Archivists, but for some reason, perhaps lack of time, they were not called upon. It is cheering to note, at least, that the Committee learned of the existence of the fledgling Association, and heartening also to see that ar-

chivists are recognized as having something to offer to the discussion of this very difficult area of public business.

The Canadian literature on the question of access to government information remains limited despite considerable recent public agitation. The *Minutes of Proceedings* of the Forsey-McCleave Committee provide the most extensive collection of opinion and argument on all sides of the question, and may be recommended to anyone with an interest in probing the matter.

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Annual Report, 1976/1977. MULTICULTURAL HISTORY SOCIETY OF ONTARIO. Prepared by R.F. HARNEY. [Toronto: The Society], 1977. [24] p. maps. Free (Available from the Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 5 Hoskin Ave., Toronto, Ontario M5S 1H7).

A first annual report has been published by the Multicultural History Society of Ontario, a non-profit corporation formed in 1976 and funded by lottery revenue. Its objectives are to promote and advance studies in the history of ethnocultural groups within Ontario, to collect and catalogue relevant materials, to arrange for their safe-keeping and accessibility, to encourage the publication of primary research on the ethnocultural groups and to publicize their important contributions to the growth and development of Ontario. It is a handsome production, with imitation parchment pages and a cover displaying facsimile "ethnic" documents.

The contents are standard fare as annual reports go, including lists of personnel and board members, a financial statement, charts outlining research distribution, and a partial list of accessions. Professor Robert Harney, President of the Society, manages some skilful pen work to present the objectives and aims of the society while describing nearly every activity. However, he leaves the reader asking how and when the materials will be transferred to the Archives of Ontario, which is stated to be the primary depository of material collected.

Some of the aims of the Multicultural History Society — the promotion of ethnic studies, the publishing and publicizing functions — are not traditional archival occupations. The selection and acquisition of materials for preservation, their arrangement and description, however, are. Although Maurice Careless, Chairman of the Society's Board of Directors, states that the Society's task is "above all archival — to collect and save," the Society functioned for a year without an archivist on staff, an oversight seemingly vindicated by the fact that "in the ten months before [they] had a professional archivist or archival space, not a single piece of material entrusted to the Society by researchers was misplaced or damaged." The exact role of the archivist now hired is not clear. Researcher/collectors outnumber archivists thirty-five to one (with the exception of archivists employed by the several co-operating institutions). Their training consists of a seminar and instruction by Professor Harney and the librarians on the methods of tape recording historical source material and of gathering and submitting photographs and written material. This is followed by the archivist's instruction in technical procedures. Among the responsibilities suggested for the archivist, those that stand out are: "copes . . . with the concern and occasional hostility of those who represent more traditional provenances and collecting jurisdictions," and "maintains the balance between the enthusiasms of our crusade to save ethnocultural and non-English language material from oblivion and the more deliberate and professional tempo of archives development."

These statements show an awareness of the existence of archival principles, but the Society's "principal [sic] of ethnicity as an organizing principle for [their] collection of