

Actes du colloque sur les archives et recherches régionales du Canada français tenu à l'Université d'Ottawa les 17 et 18 février 1977. Organisé par le CENTRE DE RECHERCHE EN CIVILISATION CANADIENNE-FRANCAISE DE L'UNIVERSITE D'OTTAWA. Compte rendu publié en collaboration avec l'Association canadienne-française pour l'avancement des sciences (ACFAS). Montréal: ACFAS; Ottawa: Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française, c1977. 169 p. \$5.00.

Since the late 1960s the federal government seems to have rediscovered the Francophones outside Quebec in the context of an increasingly independence-minded nationalist movement within that province. Dissatisfied with how little this "rediscovery" has helped to staunch the relentless hemorrhage of assimilation, various Francophone associations united in 1975 to form the Fédération des francophones hors Québec (FFHQ). Since the election of the Parti québécois, the FFHQ has become increasingly vocal and militant in order to squeeze every possible benefit from frightened federal officials.

The full significance of *Actes du colloque sur les archives et recherches régionales au Canada français* can only be appreciated in the context of this broader resurgence of interest in the Francophone minorities outside Quebec. Like the FFHQ, founded to unite and coordinate the efforts of the regional associations which had until then acted in isolation, the *colloque*, held at the University of Ottawa in February 1977, brought together researchers on the Francophone minorities who previously had been working largely in ignorance of what their colleagues in other provinces were doing. The FFHQ produced in the spring of 1977 *Les héritiers de Lord Durham*, at once a *cri d'alarme*, a survey of the Francophone minorities, and a programme to bring them back from the verge of annihilation. *Archives et recherches régionales au Canada français* constitutes a survey of the state of, and resources for, research on the Francophone minorities as well as on certain regions within Quebec and indicates to some degree the direction such research will take.

In archival terms, this book is a "preliminary inventory" with all that implies in incompleteness and distortions. There is no survey, for example, on the state of research in Prince Edward Island, British Columbia, or (less justifiably) Eastern Ontario, yet there are three reports on Franco-Alberta. While the book makes no pretensions to completeness, it is, nonetheless, astonishing that there is no report from the host institution, the Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française de l'Université d'Ottawa which would have been best qualified to fill the Ontario gap.¹

Even allowing that this is the preliminary inventory of a new research field, there is too often lacking an analysis designed to discern trends and opportunities for collaboration. This book cries for a concluding article which would draw out the themes which appear with remarkable regularity in report after report. One of these is the recency of scientific study of the minorities, begun in the 1960s and thus roughly coinciding with the reawakening of the minority groups themselves. In most cases reports indicate that researchers are at the stage of preparing bibliographies and archival inventories and that the proliferation of monographs and articles will begin within the next few years. Another common theme is the establishment of regional *centres de recherches*, often within the walls of a university, to plan and fund long-term, large-scale projects and to give a general direction to research. These, and no doubt several other themes and ideas, could have been brought out in a thoughtful, analytical article by a researcher of the calibre of Pierre Savard. Also lacking is a bibliography, which would have allowed

¹ *Archivaria* 4 (Summer 1977): 198-201 contains a short description of French-Canadian archives in Moncton, Sudbury and Ottawa by Jacques Grimard.

some of the articles to be more reflective by freeing them from the clutches of graceless lists of names and titles, while at the same time, offering precise reference to such important works as the *Union List of Manuscripts in Canadian Repositories* and the *Guide des sources d'archives sur le Canada français, au Canada*, which are nowhere mentioned.

The establishment of the *centres de recherche* is of particular interest to archivists since in all cases these institutions have also become specialized documentation centres. With the exception of Alberta, the English-Canadian provincial archives have either neglected to acquire Francophone collections or have been neglected by researchers. The result is that the *centres de recherche* have become the archival repositories of the Francophone minorities. Even the Archives nationales du Québec, which, among provincial archives, is in the vanguard of regional collecting, has been beaten to the private collections of the Trois-Rivières region, where Claude Lessard suggests they be left to the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières. But if the public archives have neglected the Francophones, there seems little doubt that the researchers have also neglected the public archives. The Public Archives of Canada is full of material relating to the Francophone minorities, a fact barely mentioned. Indeed, the absence of a report on material relating to the Francophone minorities at the Public Archives of Canada is another evident *lacuna* in this collection.

One particularly interesting contribution, however, is Paul-P. Chassé's passionate portrayal of the almost desperate situation of French America and of Franco-American studies. The contrast between the gloom of Chassé's article and a certain spirit of excitement and confidence which characterizes the great majority of articles is striking and heartening. Once again there is a parallel with the new militancy of the FFHQ, now charged with a desperate energy. Whether the enthusiasm of beginning a great project, to which *Archives et recherches régionales au Canada français* testifies, can be maintained, or whether it will wither in despair, will be determined in large part by the ability of Canadians, French and English, to recognize the value of the Francophone minorities and to reverse the tide of assimilation. Failing this, the only publications to issue from the research now so boldly begun will be obituaries on extinct societies.

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Man the Builder: An Illustrated History of Engineering. J.P.M. PANNELL.
London: Thames and Hudson, c1977. 252, [4] p. ill., maps, ports. \$14.98.

A Voice From Afar: The History of Telecommunications in Canada.
ROBERT COLLINS. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd, c1977. 304 p.
ill., ports. ISBN 0 07 082536 X \$14.95.

Neither of these two books is about archives, but do not be dismayed. For those individuals inclined towards serious thought about why archives exist, and why they are archivists instead of antique dealers or plumbers, these books could have considerable impact.

J.P.M. Pannell's *Man The Builder: An Illustrated History of Engineering* is a survey, from Rome to the present, of six significant areas of civil engineering and construction: roads, rivers and canals, railways, docks and harbours, water supply and public health, and bridges. It is primarily, but not exclusively, English in its emphasis. It will bring a few surprises to the initiated and provide an admirable introduction to