

Here we see the aims and objectives of the Archives and Records Association of New Zealand written up with Wilfred Smith's signature attached. This does not mean that the visitor in any way compromised his own attitudes, or accepted the role of puppet. The truth is that the things that are wrong in New Zealand archives are obvious to any trained observer, and the Smith report could easily have been written on the basis of the documents that were supplied to the Dominion Archivist before he left Canada. The archivists, records managers, and historical research workers of New Zealand believe that a considerably greater proportion of available resources should be allocated to the provision of better facilities, the engagement of more staff, the upgrading of archivists and record managers in salary scales and the creation of new infrastructure to enable better services to be provided. It would be strange indeed if the visiting Dominion Archivist of Canada did not agree with them.

Will the publication of the Smith report help them to achieve their objectives more quickly, more thoroughly? That is the question.

Robert Sharman
State Librarian, Western Australia

Eyes of Time

Photography and history were the focal points for the first of a projected series of national conferences sponsored by the Public Archives of Canada. *The Eyes of Time*, presented 23-26 May 1978 by the National Photography Collection in association with Heritage Canada, attempted to bring together the creators, users and custodians of the photographic record to exchange views and ideas. Its organizers hoped that the conference would also "stimulate a national awareness of the photograph as an historical record". A whole series of photographic events were orchestrated. The nationally distributed *Weekend Magazine's* colour feature put the conference and its subject before some five million readers, while newspaper and radio coverage and numerous photography exhibitions in Ottawa, to say nothing of the eye-catching logo designed for the conference, must have made the Ottawa public almost camera-shy. The time was well-chosen to insinuate such a topic into the public consciousness for the 10 July 1978 issue of *Maclean's* featured an article by Tom Hopkins on "The New Masters: How the photographer's art finally came of age". According to art critic Gary Michael Dault, "Vintage photos are doing much better than gold as an investment". If numbers are anything to judge by, the conference succeeded beyond the planner's dreams. Some two hundred participants from across Canada, and the United States included creators (38 photographers and 27 teachers of photography), custodians (26 archivists and 37 curators) and 56 users of photographs along with 15 staff members of the National Photography Collection.

Less successful was the aim to bring such a diverse group together to achieve a productive exchange on our photographic heritage. General sessions, where each speaker represented one of the three major interest groups, alternated with workshops each designed to attract one of the three groups. Yet from the very first general session, it became apparent that the number and volubility of the active photographers present would result in attention being focussed on contemporary photographers and their problems far away from the retrieval and interpretation concerns of archivists and historians. This was especially upsetting because the required reading for the conference (*Archivaria* number 5, winter 1977/78) was directed squarely at historical photographs and archival considerations. In "The Photograph: Record in a Visual Age" most attention was directed to Ted Grant who was closely questioned about the objectivity and representativeness of his photo-documentary work on the modern cowboy's daily life.

Dan Jones, a photo-archivist at the Peabody Museum (Harvard University) and Jacques Lacoursière of the Quebec Ministry of Education, who both aimed their remarks at the use and documentation of historical photographs, fielded fewer and less impassioned questions.

This trend continued when the second general session's topic "The Photograph as a Vested Interest" was interpreted mainly in the monetary terms of modern commercial photography. Bob Fisher gave an emotional speech on the vulnerability of photographers in the face of discriminatory copyright laws and inadequate payment. As sales manager to the Image Bank of Canada, Steve Pigeon emphasized the benefits of his aggressive sales policy reaped by both photographers and his employer. It was only with Robert Weinstein, co-author of the photo-archivist's bible *Collection, Use and Care of Historical Photographs*, that more subtle values were attached to photographic images. In a compelling speech, he pointed out the conflicts involved in preserving but also making available irreplaceable historical images, and recommended different policies for the "browsers" and the "picture people". It was a strong speech, but archivists were left once more with the feeling that the photographer's viewpoint outweighed theirs, numerically at least.

As for "The Photograph and the Future", the third and final general session, the three speakers were even more varied in their responses. Hans van Eesteren presented a slick slide show put together by Polaroid Corporation emphasizing the firm's innovations and breakthroughs of the past and projecting future technical developments. Briefly describing his centre for creative photography at the University of Arizona, Harold Jones emphasized the need to collect more than the usual few prints of each photographer. To adequately document the artist or the creative product of a photographer a whole variety of material is important, including his writings, equipment and creative influences. Peter Robertson, in discussing photojournalism, chose to highlight technological advances as well as the development of the "thinking photographer".

While the workshops were able to satisfy some of the archivists' desires for sessions more suited to their interests, any pretense at discussing common interests was dropped. Of the six workshops, two were tailored specifically for archivists and attracted few others. "Competing for Collections" witnessed a lively exchange between Louise Hamel of the Archives nationale du Québec, who argued the need for regionalization and a clear division of responsibilities in the area of acquisitions, and Lilly Koltun who defended the National Photography Collection's mandate to collect any photographs of "national significance". Under this policy almost any important group of photographs, even when documenting the life of a specific region, could be interpreted as federal in scope. Experiences with methods of diffusion including microfilm, microfiche and even videotape were shared amongst participants. In the workshop "Caring for Collections", Klaus Hendriks took a lion's share of the time to present the latest information available on the preservation of colour photographs, in particular showing the dramatic effects of lowered temperatures on slowing down dye fading in Kodak film. Although there was little time available for James Borcoman from the National Gallery of Canada, it was generally conceded that the interest in the topic warranted a longer session. Such specific information was exactly what many of the participants had been yearning for.

Estelle Jussim's masterful summation of the conference brought the three isolated groups to a better understanding of the issues that divide them and the nature of the medium which unites them. After an astute analysis of the sessions, she used the film *Listen to Britain* to illustrate the importance of verbal explanation to visual interpretation. In a soundless sequence we witnessed what appeared to be a documentary on Britain at war. It was only when the introductory narration was run that we recognized

it as a war propaganda film. As she said, "*Les yeux du temps* without *les mots du temps* may prove to be rather unreliable". She then went on to identify the issues yet to be tackled: the nature of meaning in photographs, "*how* photography communicates, how it persuades, how it alters behavior, if, indeed, it *does* any of these things", and more especially the definitions of the terms "photography" and "history", the declared topics of the conference. A polished performance by a perceptive observer, this speech ended the conference on an upbeat note and suggested fruitful directions for future meetings.

For someone attempting to become familiar with a specialized and rapidly developing field, the conference provided a marvellous learning experience. The general sessions and workshops were equalled in value by the exchanges with other specialists in the field, made accessible through the complete list of names and addresses of speakers and registrants in the conference booklet. The book display and numerous exhibits, tours and special events allowed for total immersion and a consequent broadening of outlook and approach. As with most good conferences, one went hoping for answers and came away at least knowing a few of the right questions.

Judith Hudson Beattie
Centre de recherche en civilisation
Canadienne-française

Canadian Conference on Historical Resources

The Canadian Conference on Historical Resources first met in 1960, at the instigation of representatives of the provinces of British Columbia, New Brunswick, and Ontario. It now encompasses all thirteen federal, provincial, and territorial governments. Each government sends representatives from agencies directly or indirectly concerned with heritage preservation, the largest proportion being from museums and historic sites agencies. The purpose of the Conference is largely to provide an informal forum for government agencies in the field to exchange information and discuss mutual problems.

The eighteenth annual Conference took place in Victoria, B.C., from 16-20, October 1978. In addition to a panel discussion on archives and records management, the agenda dealt with certain topics in detail: National Museums policy and provincial priorities; latest developments in archeological research; the need for a definitive inventory of historic sites in Canada; area conservation. One of the most interesting sessions concerned the need for public education in area conservation presented by Michael Middleton, Executive Officer, Civic Trust of Britain. The Conference ended with a dinner (featuring one of the founding fathers of the Conference, Willard Ireland, as guest speaker) and a tour of historic sites in and around Victoria.

The session of most direct relevance to archivists was that on "Archives and Records Management", chaired by John McFarland, Director of the Historic Resources Branch in the Government of Manitoba. Panel members were the Provincial Archivist of B.C., Allan Turner, his counterpart in Manitoba, John Bovey, and myself. Considering the fact that so few archivists were present (the only others being Bill Ormsby, Archivist of Ontario, and Bill Open, Yukon Archives), the session was well received by the thirty or forty persons present. At the close of the morning it seemed that the relevance of archives and records management was quite clearly understood by the user agencies. The meeting expressed particular interest in the state of conservation in archives across Canada.

What is the future role of archives in this Conference? Most delegates naturally view