

# *Records Management and the Ontario Archives, 1950-1976*

by BARBARA CRAIG

Ontario's impressive post-war expansion was encouraged by the incumbent conservative administration of Leslie Frost which assigned a positive role to government in directing economic and social development.<sup>1</sup> Conscious expansion of the government's business inevitably had repercussions, increasing the physical size of the government complex and complement, creating new departments and encouraging the development of professional management techniques to more efficiently discharge new responsibilities and to contend with an ever increasing volume of traditional work.<sup>2</sup> Eventually, the increased scale and intensity of government business compromised traditional filing practices and put a greater pressure on existing information retrieval systems.<sup>3</sup> Throughout the government there was a failure to view records keeping as an integral, perhaps

- 
- 1 In 1944 the Budget Address by Provincial Treasurer Leslie Frost epitomized this expansive mood of government: "We are building not only for these times, we are planning for a greater population, for industrial expansion, for prosperous farms and for a happy healthy people. We are laying the foundations for a greater and stronger Ontario". (*Debates of Ontario*, 16 March 1944, p. 976). During the 1950's and 1960's, fluctuations in emphasis notwithstanding, active government participation in virtually all aspects of Ontario life was reflected in burgeoning legislative activity, increased physical capital investment and the consequent proliferation of government units of both a regulatory and administrative nature. Since 1950, for example, capital investment in the construction of provincially owned and operated mental facilities tripled the number of those institutions. A few of the new administrative units created in this period were: The Department of Planning and Development (1944); Ontario Housing Corporation (1964); Ontario Hospital Insurance Commission (1956); Ontario Water Resources Commission (1957); The Department of University Affairs (1964) and the Ontario Medical Services Insurance Plan (1966). For a succinct analysis of the period see D.R. Raymond, *The Economic Transformation of Ontario: 1945-1973* (Toronto, 1974) and Vernon Lang, *The Service State Emerges in Ontario: 1945-1973* (Toronto, 1974).
  - 2 The size of Ontario's civil service nearly tripled from 1952 to 1972 from 23,295 to 67,501. See *Annual Report of the Civil Service Commission, 1973* (Toronto, 1974). Pursuant to recommendations of a Committee on the Organization of Government in Ontario in 1959, an Organization and Methods Services Branch was established in Treasury Board's Secretariat to act in an advisory capacity to departments on problems of administrative methods and techniques. Ontario Archives (hereafter omitted), R.G.27 Management Board, Treasury Board Paper, May 1966.
  - 3 R.G.3, Office of the Premier, Robarts Papers, file Public Records and Archives. "The Establishment of the Provincial Archives Records Centre", G.E. Moore to the Hon. B.L. Cathcart, 13 March 1962—"Since the war the paper work of the Departments and Commissions has increased drastically and unless something is done soon a situation may be created that would be quite costly to correct in future years."

arguably the most important, element in administrative efficiency.<sup>4</sup> Registries and vault storage, adequate techniques for an earlier period, had been slowly abandoned by Ontario in the years after the Great War, being replaced by numerous *ad hoc* systems of records control and storage whose configurations in turn changed dramatically, responding to increased records activity in the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>5</sup> In virtually all cases individual departments exercised total control over the introduction of new systems. Mounting backlogs of dormant and dead records, increased time for information retrieval and an uncontrolled proliferation of microform applications, strong indictments of uncoordinated practices, indicated an acute need for comprehensive records management, a need only dimly perceived by most administrators. Notable exceptions were the province's Archives and Treasury Board's Secretariat.<sup>6</sup>

From a central perspective, these two agencies could appreciate the extent and implications of Ontario's mounting records management problem. While new excursions in records creation and maintenance were frequently brought to Treasury Board's attention on a piecemeal basis through compulsory budgetary approvals and the annual planning procedure, all requests for disposal of records were subject to the uniform statutory requirement of the Archives Act.<sup>7</sup> Yet unlike Treasury Board's Secretariat, the acknowledged fulcrum of government administration whose central rôle was backed by regulatory power, budget and staff, the Archives was almost universally considered peripheral to government, an antiquarian organization dealing with the past as a service to a small group of scholars. Despite the Archivist of Ontario's wide statutory authority over provincial records, the authority was hollow backed by little power and even less budget and fewer staff. Nonetheless, from the Archives came the idea and the impetus for Ontario's records management programme.

Founded in 1903<sup>8</sup>, the Bureau of Archives was for many years synonymous with the activities of Alexander Fraser, first Archivist of Ontario. In the first *Report of the Bureau of Archives* (1904), Fraser outlined the aims and functions of his Bureau which he later summarized in a paper given at the 1911 Buffalo meetings of the American Historical Association:

The main purpose of the Bureau is that of a records office of State papers, primarily for their proper preservation and for the greater convenience of the public service. . . . Nevertheless . . . Government

- 
- 4 R.G.27, Records Management Committee (hereafter R.M.C.), file Moore Report. Guy E. Moore et al., *Records Management in the Ontario Government, A Report to Treasury Board*, 12 March 1965, pp. 4 and 18. (Hereafter cited as *Moore*).
- 5 Examination of records between 1945 to 1965 from the record groups of selected ministries at the Archives of Ontario reveals a growing volume of paper production which reflects the explosion of government activity and an accompanying proliferation of file systems. Two examples are the In-House Preliminary Inventories for the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education (unpublished). Similar conclusions were drawn by a Records Services Branch registry survey in 1971. R.G.27, R.M.C., Minutes, Meeting # 35, 25 February 1971.
- 6 R.G.27, R.M.C., file R.M. Correspondence. D.F. McOuat to Moore, 14 January 1965.
- 7 *Revised Statutes of Ontario*, cap. 22, sections 2, 3, and 6.
- 8 At the request of Premier George Ross, Fraser prepared a report, "The Historical Archives of the Province of Quebec" which apparently convinced the Premier of the value of both Fraser and an Archives. On July 8, 1903 an Order-In-Council appointed Fraser Archivist of Ontario retroactive to July 1. R.G.3, Orders-In-Council, vol. 47, folio 164.

records alone do not nor cannot embrace all the archives . . . . of a Province. . . . The Bureau is therefore double bared, . . . . [collecting] outside material that may . . . . [bear] upon the political or social history of Ontario.<sup>9</sup>

A man of many enthusiasms, Fraser's eclectic acquisition policy was essentially motivated by antiquarian interests and despite the accession of some government records, little formal contacts with departments were developed and none sustained. Although he visualized the Bureau as the government's record office, with no statutory or regulatory authority little could be done by one man to systematize orderly records appraisal or disposal:

While effort has been directed on these lines, I have paid more attention to the collecting of much neglected material throughout the province. . . . When I undertook to organize the department I decided that the most valuable service I could render to the public was to acquire . . . . whatever material I could find.<sup>10</sup>

In line with thinking in other jurisdictions, official documentary publications, such as the Archives' *Annual Reports*, became the chief government record activity of the Bureau and resulted in a significant series of scholarly works.<sup>11</sup> By necessity and predilection, the Bureau's activities emphasized service to scholars and posterity: little was done to entrench the Archives' service function to government within the administration.

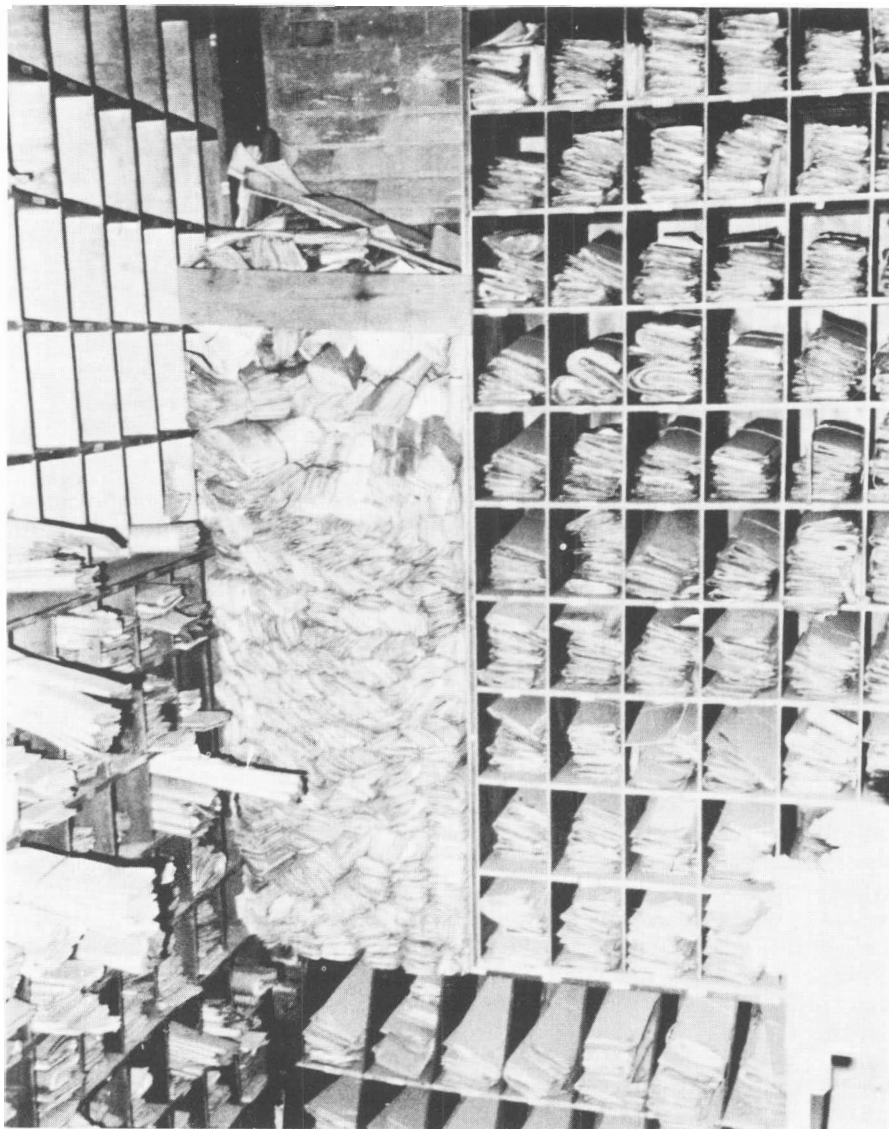
Fraser and his Bureau were wanderers in the bureaucracy, reporting to a succession of ministers for legislative purposes. It was the *Archives Act* of 1923<sup>12</sup> which inaugurated a period of more regularized government contacts. Indeed the Act, while not solving the persistent placement problem, gave the Archivist of Ontario status as a deputy head of department to counterbalance the vagaries of institutional placement. Actively supported with more staff and increased appropriations, the Provincial Archivist was given statutory responsibility to review and approve or reject all requests for the disposal of government records. The anticipated brighter archival future tied to a recognized responsibility for the public record was interrupted by the Depression and War Years, an era of drastic cut-backs in budget and staff. Infrequently used and little known to the administration, the Archives was subjected to severe attacks and probably only survived through the intercession of certain influential scholars. Writing to Premier Mitchell Hepburn, Provincial Secretary Harry Nixon castigated a "branch under your own department which I have frequently criticized in the Legislature as being ridiculously expensive in overhead" and recommended a reorganization to reduce staff and to transfer the function to his jurisdiction—"If

9 Alexander Fraser, "The Ontario Archives: Scope of its Operations", American Historical Association, 1913, p. 358.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 362. From July to December 1903, Fraser conducted the first systematic records survey in the Ontario government which he published in the first *Report of the Bureau of Archives* (1904). This survey was not updated or expanded until 1952.

11 See *Bureau of Archives Reports*, 1904 to 1918/1919; *Report, Department of Archives*, 1920; *Reports, Department of Public Records and Archives*, 1928 to 1933.

12 "Archives Act", *Ontario Statutes*, 1923, cap. 20, sections 3, 4, and 7. The original title on first reading was "An Act to provide for the care and permanent preservation of the Public Archives of the Province of Ontario."



*Discontinued vault storage for files of the Official Guardian, Osgoode Hall, Toronto, 1969. (Archives of Ontario, file Archives Activities)*

you see your way clear to carry out reorganization along this line . . . I could guarantee that the public service will not suffer one iota”.<sup>13</sup> Custody and care of the public record was not the issue. At stake was the very existence of the Archives. The nadir was reached in 1936 when Hepburn seriously contemplated

---

<sup>13</sup> R.G.3, Hepburn Papers, “Private” 1934, file Archives. H.C. Nixon to M. Hepburn, 16 July 1934. Subsequently, resignations were requested from eight of the staff, including Fraser.

closing the Archives and transferring all records to the Public Archives of Canada.<sup>14</sup>

By 1950 much lost ground had been regained. The Archives seemed to have found a permanent and congenial administrative home in the Department of Education and more money was assigned to support archival functions.<sup>15</sup> In that year, George Spragge was appointed Archivist of Ontario. One of the founders of the Archives Section of the Canadian Historical Association<sup>16</sup> and a respected scholar, Dr. Spragge's concept of archives like Frasers' before him, embraced the records office concept extending it to include a vigorous records service programme to be mounted and sustained by an enlarged and professional archival organization. Not content to play a passive rôle on the periphery of government, Spragge's objectives were to secure a permanent position for the Archives within the public service by solving the recurring problem of institutional placement which, in the past, had so exposed the Archives to attacks on its credibility and had hampered an aggressive, confident archival presence within the government. Spragge aimed at establishing more systematic management of the records in Ontario's government, under Archives guidance.

In the twenty-eight years since the *Archives Act* few requests for archival action had been received and even fewer records had been accessioned:

The problem of the disposal of records is one causing concern today to all governments, but in many countries it is being successfully tackled jointly by government departments and archivists . . . . Because in the past so few records have been transferred by government departments to the Archives there is a tremendous accumulation of records . . . . and there is therefore a tremendous amount of work to be done. . . .<sup>17</sup>

An early attempt to remedy this situation was the formalization of disposal/transfer forms prepared by Spragge in August 1951. In response to an inquiry from the Department of Education concerning the disposition of Ryerson Papers stored in the Department, Spragge took the opportunity to outline his theory of a more active archival presence in government by introducing new forms "so that the provisions of the Archives Act might be fulfilled: that nothing might be destroyed without my acquiescence".<sup>18</sup> A succession of such memoranda to various departments produced little concrete results and, more importantly, little continuous action. The disposal of records remained a permissive business at the option of the requesting department.

In the summer of 1952 a fortuitous contact with Leslie Frost, then Premier of Ontario, appeared to open a new line of approach. With a subtle change in

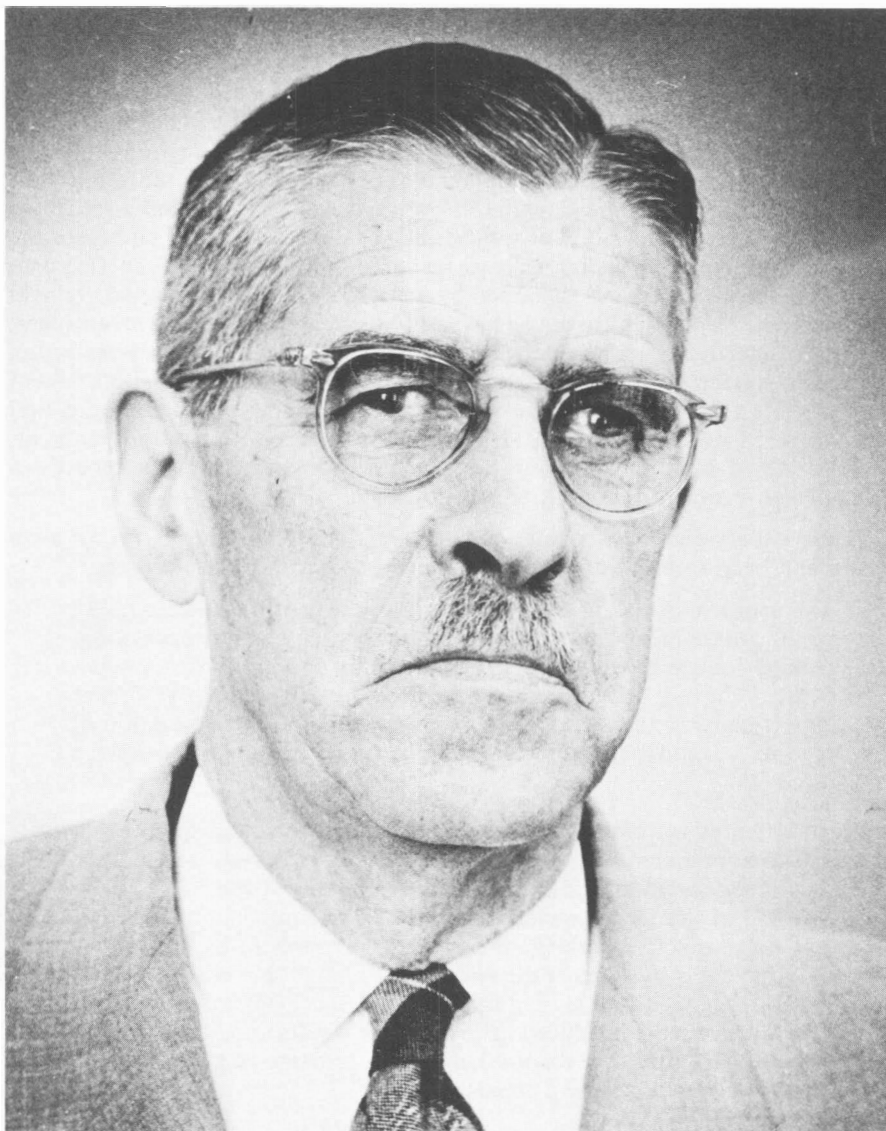
14 R.G.3, Hepburn Papers, "Public" 1936, file Archives. Secretary of State to Hepburn, 26 January 1936.

15 *Ontario Public Accounts*, 1929-30 to 1951-52. Also R.G.3, Orders-In-Council, 31 January 1935.

16 Spragge was appointed on 1 May 1950. The Archives Section of the Canadian Historical Association was the precursor of the Association of Canadian Archivists founded in 1975.

17 R.G.17, Archives of Ontario, file Provincial Treasurer, 1951-1959. G. Spragge to H. Chater, 20 December 1951.

18 R.G.17, file Department of Education, 1951-1959. Spragge to Deputy Minister of Education, 23 August 1951 and Spragge to Provincial Treasurer, 3 July 1952.



George Spragge, *Archivist of Ontario, 1950-1963*. (Archives of Ontario, file Archives Activities)

emphasis Spragge suggested that not only should the Archives Department “preserve all non-current government records of enduring value” but also, that by fulfilling the terms of the *Archives Act* “space now filled with records of very little value may be had for useful purposes”.<sup>19</sup> Expressing definite interest, Frost authorized the Archivist to undertake a survey of government record holdings in

19 R.G.17, file Prime Minister, 1951-1959. Hon. L. Frost to Spragge 10 June 1952 and Spragge to Frost, 11 June 1952.

## RECORDS MANAGEMENT IN ONTARIO

Queen's Park.<sup>20</sup> Although the vault survey produced some significant accessions<sup>21</sup> successive efforts in the winter of 1952-53 produced no formal recognition by the Premier of the Archives as the "Provincial Public Records Office".<sup>22</sup>

Nonetheless, Spragge was encouraged to pursue greater participation in an enlarged government-wide records management activity by securing acceptance of his formal retention/disposal procedures by the Deputy Ministers' Council.<sup>23</sup> Departmental independence, long jealously guarded, was blunted by this typically informal caucus where, in congenial society, Deputy Ministers could discuss matters of mutual concern. Frost indicated his desire for the Council to examine the growing records problem and Spragge, for his part, endeavoured to justify the necessity of his recommendations. In rapid succession Spragge drafted a proposed circular memorandum to be issued to all Deputy Ministers, actively solicited the support of the Deputy Minister of Education for his proposed records retention schedules and memorialized influential members of the Council whom he felt would be sympathetic to his aims.<sup>24</sup> Armed with successful American examples and buoyed by archival records management developments in other Canadian jurisdictions, notably in the federal government and in the province of Saskatchewan, Spragge was confident of the self evident necessity of his proposals for records retention scheduling<sup>25</sup> and keenly felt their rejection by the Deputy Ministers' Council in the spring of 1954.<sup>26</sup>

While he was undoubtedly frustrated by four years of unproductive effort to establish a uniform procedure for systematic records disposal, Spragge determined to win full recognition for the Archives as a Department and to take what he felt to be his rightful place on the Deputy Ministers' Council where his word could carry more weight than in the past, when he merely prompted other players from the wings.<sup>27</sup> Experience indicated that informal communication was a dead end. Despite reasonable arguments and suggestions, decisions seemed to be heavily influenced by prestige and position. Given Spragge's expanded

---

20 R.G.17, file Prime Minister, 1951-1959. Frost to Spragge, 17 June 1952; and file Records Branch, Spragge to H.H. Walker, 6 December 1962.

21 R.G.17, file Prime Minister, 1951-1959. Inventory of Prime Ministers' Papers and Spragge to Col E.J. Young, 13 February 1953.

22 R.G.17, file Prime Minister, 1951-1959. Spragge to Col L.L. McDonald, 15 November 1952; and file Records Branch, Spragge to Walker, 6 December 1962.

23 R.G.17, file Provincial Treasurer, 1951-1959. Spragge to Chater, 8 February 1954. There is strong evidence to suggest that Spragge's approaches to the Deputy Ministers' Council were encouraged if not prompted directly by Frost.

24 R.G.17, file Provincial Treasurer, 1951-1959. "Records Disposal Recommendation", 23 July 1953. Also Spragge to C.F. Cannon, 11 December 1953; Spragge to Chater, 1 February 1954; file Prime Minister, 1951-1959; Spragge to H.H. McIntyre, 15 September 1953.

25 R.G.17, file Provincial Treasurer, 1951-1959. "Records Disposal Recommendations", 23 July 1953 and Spragge to Cannon, 11 December 1953.

26 R.G.17, file Provincial Treasurer, 1951-1959. Chater to Spragge, 8 February 1954.

27 R.G. 17, file Prime Minister. Spragge to McIntyre, 15 September 1953; phone call, Spragge to McIntyre, 22 February 1954; Spragge to McIntyre, 20 July 1954; McIntyre to Spragge 17 November 1954; R.G.3, Frost Papers, file Public Records and Archives. Frost to McIntyre, 14 October 1954. Spragge also sounded out the possibilities of establishing a citizens' Archives Board which, among other things, would "press for the establishment of a system by which government records of value could be automatically transferred to the archives", in R.G. 17, file Department of Education, 1951-1959. Spragge to Althouse, 5 April 1956.

concept of the Archives' role in the management of the governments records, institutional size and placement, and the resultant effect both had on the perception of an institution's value amongst one's peers, loomed as a very significant problems. If his correspondence reflects a new note of urgency after 1955, if unmistakable irascibility appears in his memoranda, it is because Spragge's confident assertions had been tempered by frustrating bureaucratic experience which emphasized the importance of place and pride to the apparent detriment of reason and logic. Events seemed to be outstripping the Archives and time was becoming critical. Persistent efforts by Spragge to be officially recognized as the Deputy Minister of a distinct department were eventually accepted and in 1961 he was invited to attend Council.<sup>28</sup> But in the meantime, the understandable tension generated by several years of frustration in selling archival records management was further heightened by new interest in the subject on the part of Treasury Board which, at worst, appears to have been ungenerously interpreted by the Archives as a subversive move to undercut its rightful claim on records management and at best, as an attempt to use arguments long advocated by the Archives without granting credit where just credit was due. In a letter to the Deputy Minister of Education, Spragge complained:

I have lately been informed by the Archivist of Saskatchewan that . . . the Comptroller of Revenue has been in touch with the Public Documents Committee in Regina with a view to establishing a comparable system here. I think that this is something which should be initiated by the Archives, not by the Treasury, and I therefore hope that I may be permitted to take some action without further loss of time.<sup>29</sup>

Treasury Board initiatives, vital records plans of the newly authorized Emergency Measures Organization and independent uncoordinated action by departments to solve their mounting records problems all were further indications that archival initiative was being eclipsed.<sup>30</sup> There were increased appropriations throughout this period, but without formal recognition of new programme responsibilities, funds and trained staff would not be forthcoming to undertake what had become an expanded view of archival responsibility in total government records management. If Dr. Spragge initially saw the systematic identification of permanently valuable records as his prime objective then this view, in the light of experience was amended to include a wider responsibility for the systematic management of all record disposals, thereby enabling the Archives to serve the real needs of administration as much as the perceived needs of research.<sup>31</sup>

## II

In 1959, Spragge drafted a revised bill incorporating statutory provisions for systematic records appraisal and disposition through the vehicle of records

---

28 R.G.48, Deputy Ministers Council. Minutes, 1961.

29 R.G.17, file Provincial Treasurer, 1951-1959. Spragge to Cannon, 11 December 1954.

30 The Emergency Measures Organization was formally established by Order-In-Council of 14 January 1960. It should be noted that the Department of Lands and Forests had set up their own "archives building" at Maple, Ontario in 1958. R.G.3, Frost Papers, file Public Records and Archives. F.A. MacDougall to Frost, 7 December 1961.

31 R.G.17, file Records Branch. Spragge to Walker, 6 December 1962.



retention schedules scrutinized initially by an Archives Advisory Board.<sup>32</sup> The draft bill, as well, defined full departmental status for the Archives and deputy minister rank for the Archivist of Ontario confirming the entente which Spragge had established over the years with successive Deputy Ministers of Education. Clearly this bill was an attempt to settle the question of status which had seemingly confounded Spragge's efforts to fully implement the Archives Act, by systematically coming to grips with the unwieldy configurations of the records problem.

Caught once again in the cycle of replacement the Archives moved almost immediately from Education to the Department of Travel and Publicity, thereby nullifying significant departmental support for the Bill on which Dr. Spragge had counted and inaugurating a new era of complex administrative relationships.<sup>33</sup> The move, if anything, spurred renewed efforts to establish an independently viable Archives and fostered new lines of pursuit for establishing government-wide records management. Plans for departmental re-organization, which would have made the Archives a branch within Travel and Publicity, were successfully countered and with the full support of Minister Bryan Cathcart and Deputy Guy Moore, George Spragge was invited to attend the Deputy Ministers' Council as a full member in September 1961.<sup>34</sup> Capitalizing on renewed interest in the broad records question created by mounting disposition problems<sup>35</sup> and heightened by pressing vital records requirements of the *Emergency Measures Act*, Spragge, as Chairman of the Public Records Committee of the Deputy Ministers' Council<sup>36</sup>, prepared a report introducing the concept of a dormant records centre, which he made the focus of the proposed programme—the obvious accountable economic gain for the government.<sup>37</sup> He had seen this operating successfully on his February 1961 visit to Ottawa. The Report carried unanimously and was recommended to the Minister of Travel and Publicity for implementation.<sup>38</sup>

Not surprisingly, it was the records centre idea which commanded immediate and genuine support from those who held decisive power within the upper echelons of the bureaucracy. Spragge seized upon this vehicle to translate lip service to the Archives into concrete action which he wagered could be turned to support for his broader programme objectives.<sup>39</sup> A sizeable correspondence be-

32 The draft bill is included in R.G.17, file Records Branch. On the surface its provisions seemed to dilute the already wide statutory power of the Archivist in government records disposition by giving the Advisory Board power to authorize retention and destruction of records quite apart from consultation with the Archivist, who was to scrutinize disposal recommendations only for those classes of documents recommended for such review. From 1960 to 1963 Spragge pressed several times for renewed consideration of the bill but it was never resurrected.

33 R.G.3, Orders-In-Council, 1 April 1959.

34 R.G.48, Minutes, 1961; R.G.3, Frost Papers, file Public Records and Archives. Spragge to Frost, 14 March 1961.

35 R.G.3, Robarts Papers, file Public Records and Archives. Moore to Cathcart, 14 March 1962.

36 R.G.48, Minutes, 8 September 1961. The September meeting of the Deputy Ministers' Council discussed the preservation of government records and moved the setting up of a committee "to consider all aspects of the proper treatment of non-current Government records (of either temporary or permanent value) and . . . report its findings to the next meeting of the Council".

37 R.G.3, Robarts Papers, file Public Records and Archives. Report "Public Records" prepared by G. Spragge, Chairman, Public Records Committee, Deputy Ministers' Council, 4 October 1961.

38 R.G.48, Minutes, 20 October 1961.

39 R.G.48, Report "Public Records", 4 October 1961. R.G.3, Robarts Papers, file Public Records and Archives. Report "Proposed Provincial Archives Records Centre", 3 April 1962 and memorandum "The Establishment of the Provincial Archives Records Centre", Moore to Cathcart, 13 March 1962.



*Mixed records and equipment storage, Ontario Provincial Police building, Lakeshore Boulevard, Toronto, 1969. (Archives of Ontario, file Archives Activities)*

tween Cathcart, Frost, and later John P. Robarts and numerous memoranda prepared by the Archives on the Records Centre question throughout 1961 and 1962 revealed two significant facts. While there was a very real and now a perceived need for a records centre and indeed various existing government structures were examined as possible sites, there was, as well, a corresponding imprecision of knowledge about actual records accumulation<sup>40</sup>, a lack of statistically accurate projections<sup>41</sup> of future needs and an absence of records management experience and expertise which would command unquestioning Treasury support for the project.<sup>42</sup> Treasury Board, like the Archives, had a central view of the growing records management problems of the Ontario government but from the perspective as arbiters of competing claims on funding

40 Spragge estimated about 200,000 cubic feet in the Toronto area alone based on expanded calculations from the 1952 survey. R.G.17, file Records Branch, Spragge to Walker, 6 December 1962. The 1959 Public Works survey indicated about 59,000 cubic feet of "active records". R.G.3, Robarts Papers, file Public Records and Archives. Moore to Cathcart, 13 March 1962.

41 Proposals to use Lands and Forests "archives" building at Maple, Ontario were vetoed by Treasury Board since the building could not accommodate Treasury files in the main vault of the Parliament Buildings. R.G.17, file Records Branch. Draft "Report to Treasury Board", 11 January 1963.

42 R.G.3, Robarts Papers, file Public Records and Archives. Clarke to Frost, 11 December 1961; Frost to Farrell, 12 December 1961. Also see Farrell to Robarts, 24 January 1962—"I believe that an archives records service would serve a useful function as each department has its own ideas of saving and destroying records." Robarts was not convinced that the matter was pressing

for programmes and the physical plant and staff needed for ongoing operations.<sup>43</sup> Always alert to the sensitive balance of power within the bureaucracy, undoubtedly proud of their own paramount rôle and ever mindful of the need for efficiency and economy in operations, Treasury Board Secretariat's officers were the governments' acknowledged experts in modern administrative science.<sup>44</sup>

Despite the undeniably urgent need for at least a records centre, Treasury Board was reluctant to recommend approval with so little solid statistical comprehension of what was needed and how much that would cost to mount and sustain. Independent file, microfilm and space studies all pointed to a great need but to date no one had been given the mandate with necessary funds and staff support to do a complete records survey.<sup>45</sup> Records management as an independent management function was certainly not present in Treasury Board and in the light of their position as the repository of management expertise it is understandable that they were reluctant to concede such expertise to a small agency of government whose function, in their view, was relegated to residual uses of records and services associated with these uses. Only recently accorded Deputy Minister status, the Archivist's position within the hierarchy had not been solidified. His agency which, in the past, had weathered some formidable attacks on its complement, programmes and, by inference, its status was not likely to be looked upon as a suitable place to put such a significant new programme.

Within a government context estimates are regarded as the official expression of departmental policy. Action was precipitated by the Archives in their 1963-64 estimates which requested five new staff and substantial additional appropriations to mount a records management programme, including a permanent records centre and a continuing Public Documents Committee. Supported

---

enough to require immediate attention and returned the memo with a note to hold indefinitely. Subsequent intervention by Frost, recently retired as Premier, prompted a re-examination. Frost to Robarts, 20 March 1962—"As you know, for some years past I have taken an interest in the problem of the Provincial records and had much to do with the building of the Archives building on the crescent which, while doing good work, only touches part of the problem." Frost's recommendation of the proposed archives records centre prompted Robarts to request an immediate project proposal from the archivist. R.G.3, Robarts papers, file Public Records and Archives. Robarts to Spragge, 22 March 1962—"I think this is a matter with which you should proceed immediately."

43 R.G.27, Treasury Board Paper, May, 1966. Under the Financial Administration Act (*RSO* 1960, Cap. 142) Treasury Board was empowered to "act as a committee of the Executive Council on all matters relating to finance, revenues, estimates, expenditures and financial commitments, and on any other matter concerning general administrative policy in the Public Service that is referred to the Board by the Executive Council or on which the Board considers it desirable to report to the Executive Council".

44 R.G.27, Treasury Board Paper, May 1966. Prior to 1962, a statutory Budget Committee composed of officers of Treasury Board and others appointed from time to time was responsible for specific duties for budget and expenditure analysis. As well, the committee was responsible for making suggestions to promote efficiency and economy within any given department. In 1959, the Committee on the Organization of Government in Ontario recommended that duties assigned by the Financial Administration Act to the Budget Committee be assigned to a permanent full time staff directly attached to Treasury Board. The consulting firm engaged to study the matter recommended the establishment of two branches, a Programme Analysis Branch to handle on a full time basis the functions of the Budget Committee and an Organization and Methods Services Branch to act in an advisory capacity to departments on problems of administrative methods and techniques. In 1961 the two branches came into being.

45 Notable exceptions were the partial surveys of the Archives in 1952 and of Public Works in 1959.

wholeheartedly by the Department's mandarins, the proposal was officially submitted to Treasury Board prompting the first serious official consideration of a complete records management programme.<sup>46</sup> Appraisal of the Travel and Publicity estimate generated "some discussion....on the proposed records management programme" resulting in a Draft Report<sup>47</sup> submitted to Cathcart for comments in June 1963:

The programme has the objective of reducing the rate of accumulation of records, expediting the destruction of unnecessary records, and ensuring the retention of legally or historically valuable records .... The Treasury Board staff recognizes the value of the proposed programme, and has developed a proposal for the design and implementation of the programme.

Treasury Board's draft report on the proposed programme differed from the Archives' original submission in significant ways. As an agent of Treasury Board the Public Records Committee, a strictly temporary body "for the initial stages of the programme", was to dissolve after establishing a functioning records centre and guiding programme development to a mature stage as defined by Treasury Board. A records management expert from Treasury Board would function as secretary to the committee, in effect running the programme, while each Deputy Minister would be designated as the records officer "responsible for the overall design and supervision of the programme in the Department". The director of the proposed records centre would report to the Archivist of Ontario. Either the Archives as a unit, or at least its records storage units, should be moved to a more "suitable administrative location".

In his response to the draft report, Cathcart argued that only a permanent records branch under Archives' control and staffed by "government Records Management Archivists" could successfully undertake a full government-wide programme—"an Organization and Methods man would not do". The Committee could provide useful guidance "but as an operative body to undertake the actual large-scale disposal and management of records, we feel it would be of little practical value". Records management was far more than unloading dormant records at the records centre "like a load of waste paper. The programme of records disposals is not one that could be finally solved or disposed of in a year, or ten years, or 20 years. It is a continuing process, that needs to be handled systematically by a properly qualified permanent staff". Departmental participation in the programme would involve contacts with the records centre and the Archives on an ongoing basis; operational responsibility should, therefore, be assigned to a qualified departmental records officer and not to the Deputy Minister. While admitting that "no existing government department has functions exactly similar to the archives" Cathcart argued for the creation of an "Archives Division" within Travel and Publicity encompassing three distinct Branches, Archives, Historical Branch and Public Records Branch.<sup>48</sup>

46 R.G.17, file Records Branch. Walker to Cathcart, "Discussion of Travel and Publicity Estimates", 14 January 1963.

47 *Ibid.*, and R.G.17, file Records Branch, "Draft Report to Treasury Board", 11 January 1963.

48 R.G.17, file Records Branch, "Records Centre", Cathcart to Walker, 18 January 1963. Subsequent Treasury Board Reports and Drafts referred to the "Archives Division" of the Department of Travel and Publicity, even though this contemplated reorganization never took place.

The carefully worded exchanges of 1963 revealed sharp differences, but not on the demonstrable need or management justification for such a programme either in purely theoretical terms or in its very practical management applicability to Ontario's ever increasing public records problem. "I feel that we are in full agreement as to what we think ought to be done—the question is what the method ought to be".<sup>49</sup> Once the programme was accepted in theory, what remained was to define programme objectives and functions and determine its placement and reporting responsibility within the bureaucracy.<sup>50</sup> Treasury Board recognized that it would be somewhat premature to deal in detail with the rôle of a continuing records committee, the function of a public records centre and the action required within departments before the scope of the problem had been ascertained and an overall solution derived, at least in general terms.<sup>51</sup> "The dual nature of records management, which encompasses both general administrative and archival functions [is] . . . somewhat controversial (ie) what is the relationship of these two elements to each other and what are the organizational and procedural implications?"<sup>52</sup> The Secretariat preferred a special study, on an assignment basis, undertaken by "an individual acting as an agent of Treasury Board". However, the Deputy Minister of Treasury suggested a special interdepartmental committee for the purpose of recognizing the considerable advantage of involving various interests and naming them to the committee.<sup>53</sup>

After months of intense discussion Treasury Board appointed an interdepartmental committee to study and develop an effective records management programme for the Ontario Government.<sup>54</sup> Chaired by G.E. Moore, Deputy Minister of Travel and Publicity, the Committee had broad representation from Departments who in the past had expressed serious concern over the records problem and included spokesmen for major conflicting interests which had become very evident in the debate generated by the Archives' programme proposals in the 1963-64 estimates.<sup>55</sup> Unequivocal Treasury Board backing for its

49 R.G.17, file Records Branch. Walker to Cathcart, 18 January 1963.

50 R.G.27, RMC, file Correspondence 1961-1966. "Records Management System", Treasury Board Secretariat to C.E. Brannan, 27 September 1963.

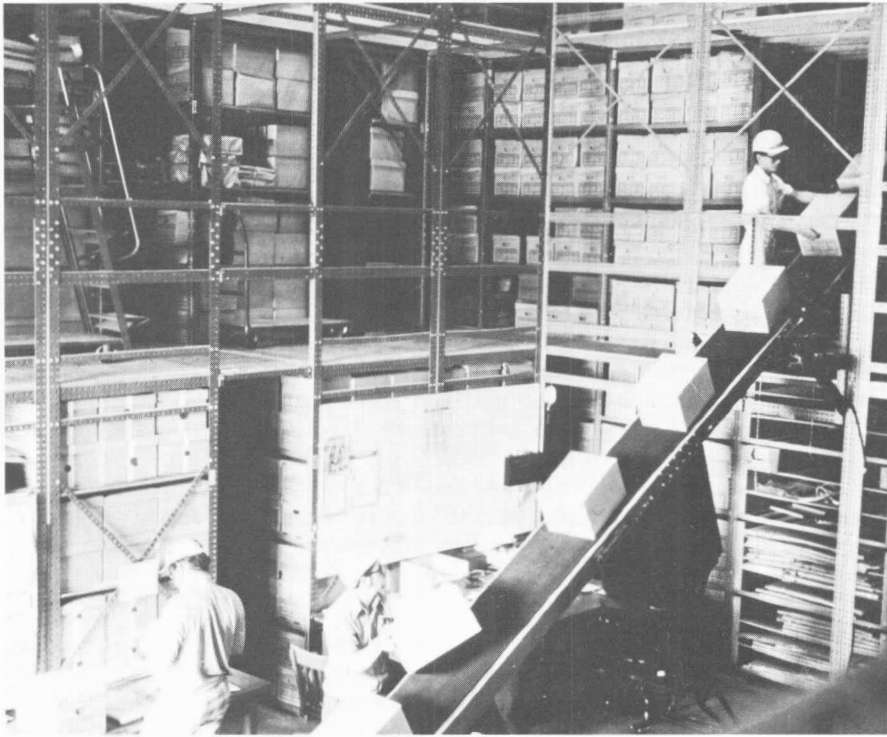
51 R.G.17, file Records Branch. Walker to Cathcart, 1 May 1963.

52 R.G.27, RMC, file Correspondence 1961-1966. Draft report to Treasury Board—"Installation of a records management system in the Government of Ontario", 26 September 1963.

53 R.G.27, RMC, file Correspondence 1961-1966. "Records Management System", Treasury Board Secretariat to Brannan, 27 September 1963. Also see R.G.17, file Records Branch. "Establishment of a Records Management Programme for the Government of Ontario", Moore to Hon. J. Auld, 3 October 1963.

54 R.G.27, RMC, file Moore Committee. Walker to Brannan, 16 June 1964, discusses the need to accommodate Emergency Measures' requirements within the terms of reference of the proposed records committee. Also Hon. F. Cass to Hon. J. Allan, January 1964—" . . . preservation of essential records is an integral part of any records management policy and should be included within this committee's terms of reference". Also R.G.17, file Records Branch. Moore to Auld, 3 October 1963—"Considerable difference of opinion existed as to the need for such an apparently elaborate programme and the suggestion was made that a committee be established to determine how to deal with this. I held off formation of such a committee until we could have our new Archivist of Ontario appointed. . . ." D.F. McQuat was appointed Archivist of Ontario effective August 1963.

55 The following people served on the Moore Committee: G.E. Moore (chairman) Deputy Minister, Department of Travel and Publicity; J.G. O'Neill, Director, Organization and Methods Services, Treasury Board; D.F. McQuat, Archivist of Ontario; R. Lewis, Clerk of the



*Records Centre interior, Archives of Ontario, August 1971. (Archives of Ontario)*

job assured necessary top management co-operation<sup>56</sup> and with staff support from Treasury Board's Secretariat and the Department of Public Records and Archives the Committee's recommendations embodied in the *Moore Report* of 1965 still stands as a landmark in the Ontario government's records management programme. Perhaps more importantly, the committee's undeniable success as a crucible for sublimating potentially divisive management conflicts through debate and consensus served as a most compelling argument for the committee technique of programme management. With a precision and accuracy not previously achieved, the Report nailed down the problem of records' generation, accumulation and disposal. It sketched the proposed solution in terms of on-going economy and management's need for efficient information retrieval. The Committee's recommendations seemed inevitable, even inescapable. Stated with a conviction and unanimity that was perhaps unexpected in the light of previous debate on the matter, the recommendations carried great weight.

---

Legislative Assembly; B. Sheriff, Director, Administrative Services Branch, Treasury Department; R.A. Copeland, Solicitor, Department of Attorney General; J.A.K. Rutherford, Deputy Director, Emergency Measures Organization; L. Briscoe, Chief, Service Branch, Department of Public Works. R.G.27, *Moore Report*, p. iii. G. White (Archives) and E. Strauss (Treasury Board) were seconded for special task force assignments.

56 R.G.27, RMC, file Moore Report. Brannan to all Deputy Ministers, 19 October 1964 and Moore to all Deputy Ministers, 23 October 1964.

Despite a disclaimer:

The information which would permit an exact assessment of the volume and nature of existing records and of other data required to make a detailed proposal for records disposition is not readily available. This in itself is indicative of the general state of records management in the Departments and Agencies of the Ontario Government.<sup>57</sup>

the *Moore Report* is a veritable catalogue of records management problems; unco-ordinated antiquated filing systems unable to meet information needs; erratic retention and disposal practices; general ignorance of the *Archives Act* with consequent loss of permanently valuable public records; inordinate accumulation of records in high cost, often inaccessible storage areas rendering retrieval difficult if not impossible; an accelerated use of costly microforms for ill-defined purposes and, as a result, an ever growing, unnecessary expenditure of public money to support these practices.<sup>58</sup> The *Moore Report* virtually endorsed all the Archives proposals and by any assessment should have added weight and credence to future actions by that agency. Records management must be "treated as an integral and essential part of efficient administration and not as an end in itself".<sup>59</sup> A precise government information policy coupled with ongoing assessments of information needs would serve as the keystones of an ongoing programme guided by a permanent Records Management Board which would supervise and co-ordinate a government wide programme, approve departmental records retention schedules and make recommendations to Treasury Board on broad records management policy. A central Record Services Branch located administratively within a strengthened, independent Department of Public Records and Archives would operate the records centre and provide "technical" guidance to a new cadre of departmental records officers who would be responsible for operating the programme at the departmental level.<sup>60</sup> Central control of the programme which the Moore Committee considered essential for success, should be grounded in regulations either under the *Financial Administration Act* or a revised *Archives Act*.

### III

In March 1965, Treasury Board considered the *Moore Report* and on 15 April 1965 a Treasury Board Minute approving the report appointed a Records Management Committee (RMC) as a permanent body reporting to Treasury Board with responsibility to evaluate and approve or reject departmental records retention schedules, to generally co-ordinate the implementation and maintenance of the records management programme and to make appropriate policy recommendations to Treasury Board. The Department of Public Records and Archives would provide the secretariat for the Committee.<sup>61</sup> In writing to the Chairman of the RMC, Irving Hilliard, the Secretary of Treasury Board explained that the programme was designed "to encourage intensified general analysis of paper work systems, to provide better filing and information retrieval

57 R.G.27, *Moore*, p. 2.

58 R.G.27, *Moore*, "Summary of Present Conditions", pp. 2-3a. Similar outlines are provided for retention requirements, pp. 10-11; space and filing systems, p. 13; and microfilm practices, p. 14.

59 *Moore*, p. 4 and p. 18.

60 *Moore*, pp. 4-6, and 20-26.

61 R.G.27, RMC, Minutes, Meeting #3, 8 March 1965.



*Donald McQuat, Archivist of Ontario, 1963-1978. (Archives of Ontario)*

systems and to co-ordinate the retention and disposal of all types of records thereby facilitating the administration and operation of all departments".<sup>62</sup> A Records Services Branch (RSB) would be established within the Department of Public Records and Archives and a directive outlining the new programme and its requirements would be sent to all senior managers.

<sup>62</sup> R.G.27, RMC, file Chairman. Brannan to I. Hilliard, 3 June 1965.



As a senior member of the RMC with the key new programme responsibilities for records management, justifiably buoyed by approvals for an RSB and increased archives complement, the Department of Public Records and Archives under the leadership of its new Archivist of Ontario, D.F. McOuat, a career civil servant with executive experience in both the Archives and Historical Branches, appeared to be confidently entering a new era of expansion and greater recognition of its unique service rôle.<sup>63</sup> McOuat's view that "the Archives of Ontario more than any other department has always been concerned with overall records disposal and management", seemed to be vindicated by the *Moore Report* and subsequent records management programme which was established.<sup>64</sup> But while supporting an expanded service rôle for the Archives within the proposed programme and indeed fully endorsing independent departmental status as a basic requirement for full authoritative government-wide action by the Archives, indirect but very real Treasury Board control over the records management programme was still considered essential.<sup>65</sup> In very practical terms neither the authority and position of the Archives was sufficiently strong, nor its function well enough known or accepted to command support for the programme from diverse departments who were sensitive to their own independence.<sup>66</sup> Recent recruits into a newly developed systems group within Treasury Board, anxious to demonstrate their abilities by undertaking new responsibilities, were perhaps naturally reluctant to see another agency usurp a function considered their own.<sup>67</sup>

Decisive action to establish a fully functioning RSB to operate the Records Centre and assist departments with their own programmes was stalled by the vexing problem of hiring qualified staff. Two successive competitions for a Director of RSB failed to attract suitably qualified people and, in the interim, the committee felt it necessary to approach outside records management service companies in order to launch the programme as soon as possible to capitalize on positive departmental support and to make it fully operational before the massive Queen's Park office extension project was well underway.<sup>68</sup> Training departmental officers, quick introduction of mass scheduling and, above all, acquisition of suitable records centre space were seen as key problems demanding immediate attention. Of the three companies considered, Harold Moulds of H.M. Record Services made the greatest impact on the committee since he dealt with records management as a management science.<sup>69</sup> In January 1966, McOuat moved that H.M. Records Services be hired on a two year contract to provide specified records services until a permanent RSB could be established.<sup>70</sup> As working consultant, Moulds would assist the Civil Service Commission in developing classifications for departmental records officers, undertake their training, develop standard procedures and controls for records retention scheduling and provide dormant storage space at his Cooksville

---

63 R.G.27, RMC, Minutes, Meeting #3, 8 March 1965.

64 R.G.27, RMC, file Correspondence. McOuat to Moore, 14 January 1965.

65 *Moore*, p. 22.

66 *Moore*, p. 25.

67 R.G.27, RMC, file Correspondence. O'Neill to Brannan, 15 May 1967.

68 R.G.27, RMC, Minutes, Meeting #3, 8 March 1964 and #4, 28 October 1965.

69 R.G.27, RMC, Minutes, Meeting #4, 28 October 1965.

70 R.G.27, RMC, Minutes, Meeting #5, 18 November 1965; Meeting #7, 25 January 1966.

records centre which the government would purchase at the expiry of the contract.<sup>71</sup>

Although the *Moore Report* specified that RSB was to be placed within the Department of Public Records and Archives with the Director reporting to the Archivist, the working consultant was directed by the committee to report bi-monthly through the Chairman who, in conjunction with the secretary, would direct the consultant's work.<sup>72</sup> Undoubtedly, exigencies of the contract arrangement made direct Treasury Board supervision desirable. It certainly was the most acceptable arrangement for the Committee as a whole during an interim period of programme development when Treasury Board officers were still very much involved in special records management studies for various departments and the Archives staff was unable to shoulder the full burden of implementation.<sup>73</sup> Yet frequent references to differences of opinion both of a philosophical nature and in very practical matters indicated that there were still competing claims for ultimate programme placement.<sup>74</sup> Despite persistent tensions over placement, the fledgling RMC in conjunction with the Archives, H.M. Records Services and Organization and Methods Services of Treasury Board were successful in establishing the framework for a vigorous ongoing programme which commanded wide support within government. Responding to acute pressure of records accumulation and to the positive overtures of the RMC several departments made urgent requests for advice and assistance.<sup>75</sup> In October 1965, the first records retention schedule (L-1 Department of Labour) was passed through the stages of approval and on 20 September 1966 the first shipment of dormant records arrived at the Records Centre.<sup>76</sup> Based on their assessment of priorities the RMC allotted assistance and advisory services to those departments whose records management needs seemed pressing:

While the Committee realizes that several ...departments are anxious to proceed with implementation of records management projects, the foregoing sequence must take priority since it is based in

71 R.G.27, RMC, Minutes, Meeting #8, 7 April 1966. The contract became effective 1 November 1966. R.G.3, Orders-In-Council 4255/66.

72 R.G.27, RMC, Minutes, Meeting #12, 18 November 1965. As contractee of the government reporting only through the Committee's chair, Moulds was placed in an ambiguous position vis-a-vis the Archivist of Ontario who was assigned full responsibility for administrative decisions on activities financed out of RSB appropriations. R.G.27, RMC, Minutes, Meeting #12, 16 November 1966. On many occasions, the Archivist urged closer co-operation between RSB analysts and archivists to streamline scheduling and facilitate prompt action. R.G.27, RMC, file Records Management Programme and Activities. McOuat to Moulds, 24 June 1968. Also see R.G.27, RMC, Minutes, Report of the Secretary, 29 January 1969. For the Archivist, the contract with H.M. Records Services was technically confusing and administratively difficult. R.G.27, RMC, file Chairman. O'Neill to Hilliard, 25 November 1965; Minutes, Meeting #3, 8 March 1965. Also see Minutes, Meeting #9, 27 May 1966, for a discussion of Treasury Board Secretariat's study of the records management needs of the Department of Municipal Affairs. And further, R.G.27, RMC, file Records Management Committee Programme, G. Bayly to R. Brown, 21 September 1966 concerning Treasury Board Secretariat's study of Highway's information retrieval from "permanent active records".

74 For example see R.G.27, RMC, Minutes, Meeting #3, 8 March 1965; Meeting #12, 15 November 1966.

75 Early participants were the Departments of Health and Labour. R.G.27, RMC, file Chairman. Circular Letter, Brown to all Deputy Ministers, 2 September 1966.

76 R.G.27, RMC, file Chairman. Moulds to Hilliard, 17 March 1967.

part upon the schedule for future occupation of the new Queen's Park office extension project and in part, upon certain other urgent considerations.<sup>77</sup>

By January 1967 thirteen departmental records officers had been appointed and the staff development programmes of H.M. Records Services was well underway.<sup>78</sup>

Records management was an idea whose time had come in the Ontario Government. Departmental response, although spotty, was overwhelmingly positive and early achievements in records retention scheduling and transfers to the Records Centre were definite cause for self congratulation. But several recurring problems plagued the RMC and its programme. Staffing the RSB and co-ordinating programme implementation across the government remained elusive objectives. In his terminal report on the records management programme, Moulds lamented that only one of the terms of reference, setting up and operating the records centre, had been accomplished to his satisfaction.<sup>79</sup> The size of departmental holdings and records procedures and techniques, long subjects of study, soon came to be viewed as symptoms of a larger problem of administrative control by departments and the RMC.<sup>80</sup> Committee control was hampered by the lack of a regularized definition of its powers and functions in the commonly accepted administrative format of directive or regulation. By functioning primarily in response to stimuli rather than taking the initiative, the RMC in conjunction with the Archives and Treasury Board placed the programme in a passive mood which negated the positive forward-looking rôle as envisioned by the *Moore Report*:

There has been. . . no clear understanding by departmental staff that records. . . should not be destroyed without the permission of the Archivist and the RMC of the Treasury Board. . . no clause in the Committee's actual terms of reference [made] this clear although a clause to this effect was contained in the original report.<sup>81</sup>

Formal structuring of retention/disposition requests (on generally accepted records retention schedules) was haphazard and the routing of such requests cumbersome and ill defined.<sup>82</sup> It was difficult to compel adherence from departments who perhaps resented new central encroachments on their independence and certainly were dubious about the powers of the RMC and its relationship to the Archives Act.<sup>83</sup> A clear definition of functions and powers would give teeth

77 See list in R.G.27, RMC, file Chairman, Circular Letter, 2 September 1966. Ontario Water Resources Commission; Ontario Housing Corporation; Department of Lands and Forests; Registrar General; Department of Health.

78 "Records Management in the Ontario Government, A report to Treasury Board Supplementary to the Moore Committee Report 1965" (Treasury Board Secretariat Project #61-1, 1968) p. i.

79 R.G.27, RMC, file Chairman. "Report of the Records Management Programme of the Records Services Branch", 24 October 1968. The Cooksville Records Centre was purchased for \$275,000 in October 1966. See *Moore Supplementary*, p. 29.

80 *Ibid.*, p. 9-10.

81 *Ibid.*, p. 10.

82 *Ibid.*, p. 31. Only 16 records retention schedules were approved by the Committee in the period 1965-1968.

83 *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11. Despite the existence of an officially approved government-wide records management programme, it is interesting that throughout this period individual departments

and credence to the Committee's regulatory role and give neophyte records officers within departments a touchstone of authority, information and advice. RSB was supposed to act in this capacity but its formation had been retarded and until late 1968 it had not been fully integrated into the government's operating structure.

In the light of three years' experience a supplement to the *Moore Report* pinpointed weak spots in the new programme. Prepared by Treasury Board officers with little formal input from the Archives, the supplementary report on *Records Management in the Ontario Government* reflected strong Treasury bias and recommended a wider rôle for that agency to be defined by a public records directive and executed by a permanent secretary drawn from Organization and Methods Services. The secretary would work closely with the Director of RSB to ensure that departmental records responsibilities were discharged according to the procedures and techniques developed by an enlarged, more representative Records Management Committee. But the backbone of the programme must be departmental records personnel, recruited and classified in a logical way designed to give them an organizational home and future development to encourage long term professional service commitment.<sup>84</sup>

It is time that management officials acknowledged officially what they admit to be true, namely that records management is no longer the routine filing task it once was. With the current emphasis on communications in all fields of government, records management requires a degree of intelligence, judgment and experience comparable to that required in other administrative services.<sup>85</sup>

Initial reluctance of Treasury Board in 1963-64 for a full records management programme in terms long urged by the Archivist of Ontario had been transformed into a zealous advocacy, placing records management initiative squarely in Treasury Board which had both staff and well developed regulatory power to secure action and compliance. RSB, organizationally placed within the Archives, had yet to come fully into operation and the consultant who temporarily headed the Branch was only responsible to the Committee Chairman by terms of the contract agreement:

During the one and a half years the consultant has been implementing the programme, there has not been a permanent civil servant appointed to work continually with him. Consequently there is no government employee fully informed to date, on the details of the

---

retained considerable independence in records management. For example, the Department of Education retained H.M. Records Services in 1969, after the expiry of their contract, to undertake a study of School Board records and in 1972 the Ministry of Community and Social Services hired outside consultants, Collins, Joyce and Co Ltd., specialists in records management, to study Ministry records problems and recommend solutions. R.G.27, RMC, Minutes, Meeting #24, 28 January 1969 and R.G.27, RMC, file Programme, R.H. Westmore to McOuat, 17 August 1972.

84 There were no uniformly applied classification standards for records personnel and a survey of twenty one departments revealed a totally illogical discrepancy in records officer classifications in all departments. *Moore Supplementary*, p. 15.

85 *Ibid.*, p. 16.

records management programme, as implemented, to ensure the uninterrupted continuity of the programme after the consultant departs. . . .<sup>86</sup>

Hampered by organization and staff problems, an aggressive operational and advisory role of the Department of Public Records and Archives was virtually impossible. Serious consideration was given to a total reorganization placing the Records Centre in Public Works and the RSB, if not as a unit, then as a function with O and M services of Treasury Board. This left the Archivist with rump responsibilities under the *Archives Act* and as a member of the RMC.<sup>87</sup> Indeed, the Public Records Directive issued under the *Financial Administration Act* in June 1968 gave Advisory Services Division of Treasury Board's Secretariat an expanded rôle providing a full-time secretary with wide executive power within the records management programme. It virtually supplanted, at least on paper, some of the key functions of the RSB of Public Records and Archives which had been performed by the "working consultant" whose administrative links with the Archives had remained underdeveloped.<sup>88</sup> Despite the paper dominance of the Secretary, further heightened with the temporary union of that office with the directorship of RSB during the interregnum before the appointment of a permanent civil servant as RSB director, repeated urgings of the Archivist prompted a policy directive to once again clarify RSB's position and function:

To summarize, the RSB, Department of Public Records and Archives is the central body designated to advise and help departments with filing methods, records scheduling and records retention procedures. The Branch also provides operational assistance, when requested by the departments, to records officers' in the establishment of records equipment and indexing techniques, and provides full records centre service for all departments of the Provincial Government. Close liaison for advice and assistance, on a reciprocal basis between the RSB and the Secretary of the RMC is, of course, essential and is in full effect.<sup>89</sup>

The 1968 Public Records Directive and subsequent circular memoranda rectified many problems noted during the initial implementation period. They clarified responsibilities of each participant in the programme, defined public records thereby removing confusion which had existed on this point and established a solid structural framework for an integrated records management programme. With the appointment of R.H. Westmore, a recently recruited Treasury Board officer with long successful records management experience in private business, as Director of RSB on 1 January 1969, the programme became fully operational in terms originally envisioned by the *Moore Report*. Archival

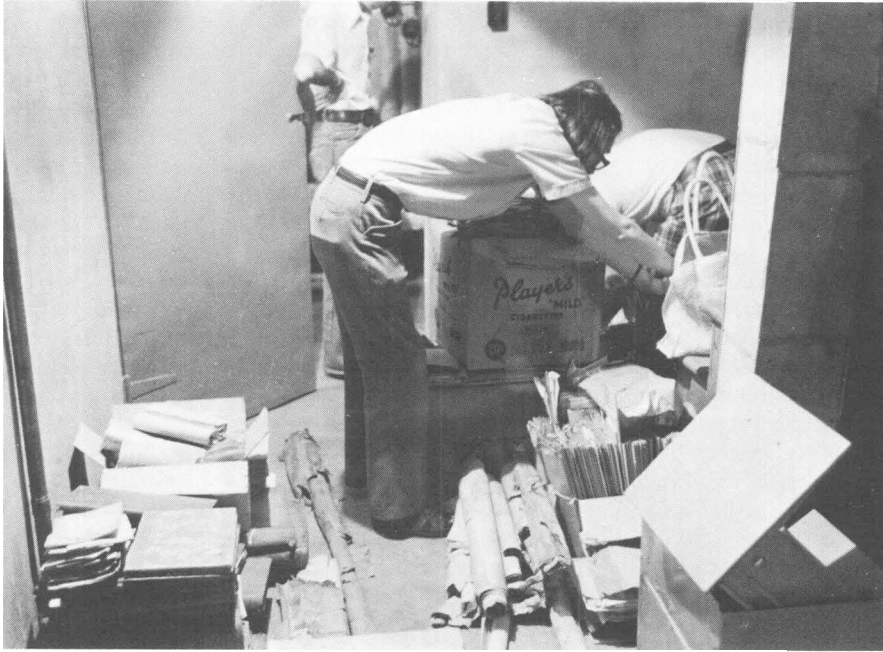
---

86 *Ibid.*, p. 24.

87 R.G.27, RMC, file Chairman. "Records Management", O'Neill to Adams, 13 May 1968 and O'Neill to Brannan, 15 May 1967—"As you appreciate, this is a rather touchy point at this time, particularly with the Provincial Archivist who still has budgetary responsibility, but who has little or no operational control of the Programme." See also *Moore Supplementary*, p. 22.

88 R.G.27, RMC, file Records Management Programme and Activities. McOuat to Moulds, 24 June 1968.

89 R.G.27, RMC, file Records Management Programme. Circular Memorandum, 25 July 1968.



*'Taking inventory' at the Court House of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, Cornwall, Ontario, August 1976. (B.L. Craig)*

records management entered a phase of positive action. The achievements recorded over the next five years rested on six factors: *one*, in the light of experience and modified objectives, periodic revisions of the programme's structural framework issued in traditionally accepted administrative formats, defined the duties and responsibilities of all major functioning units within the records management programme; *two*, an active RMC gave overall continuity, supporting operational units while keeping its acknowledged regulatory power in the background; *three*, a dynamic operational RSB whose growing service activities were imaginatively documented in statistics designed to demonstrate both the tangible and intangible benefits of the programme; *four*, active consultation with departmental Deputy Heads to ensure continuing top management support; *five*, a continually updated complex of education programmes developed and mounted by RSB which kept initiative with the Committee and RSB; and *six*, the development of uniform but expansive government-wide records officer classifications creating a group of career professionals with a vested interest in records management success.

A May 1971 deadline for the completion of records retention scheduling, coupled with a Committee directive denying records centre space for unscheduled records, significantly accelerated the pace of inventorying and scheduling. The scheduling process, systematically organized on a set of forms, dramatically assisted inventorying, graphically demonstrated gross savings in space and equipment and streamlined the approvals process. In the light of requirements, special types were developed by RSB and the Archives such as the

Master and Sub Schedule for repetitive record series in branch offices, a systems schedule for computerized record series and in-house schedules to handle non-public records which needed systematic disposition action.<sup>90</sup> "Operation Cleanup" executed with military precision in the winter of 1969-70 moved massive volumes of dead records from the Queen's Park complex and, in February 1970, Westmore advised the Committee that an equivalent volume of records identified in the *Moore Report* (150,955 cubic feet) had either been destroyed, sent to the records centre or accessioned by the Archives.<sup>91</sup> Although the deadline for scheduling completion was altered two more times and eventually abandoned as unworkable considering the constant creation of new records series, the scheduling of records and their appraisal by the Archives before disposal approvals were granted became a routine process, keeping records disposal under tight but flexible control insuring minimum retention of the valueless and maximum accessioning of permanent public records.

Special projects initiated by Committee or Archives and often undertaken with Management Services Division of Treasury Board revealed ongoing education requirements and opened up new areas for records management activity where there were proven needs for assistance.<sup>92</sup> Periodic studies of micro-recording practices notably in 1970 and 1972 undertaken to review the economic aspects of equipment utilization, brought RSB into close touch with departmental developments and, by 1973, RSB was responsible for appraising all requests for new microrecording applications.<sup>93</sup> Although various proposals for a central microfilm unit within the Department of Public Records and Archives were premature, nonetheless advisory services in that field were well developed and much sought after.<sup>94</sup> More successful was the establishment of systematic control within departments over release, re-use and purchase of filing equipment. In co-operation with Management Services Division, RSB conducted a government-wide forms review and in 1972 forms management functions were assigned to departmental records officers as part of the overall programme.<sup>95</sup> Other special projects such as an outreach assistance to business and industry on records management requirements under Ontario Statutes kept RSB and the RMC in the forefront of information and records management needs as they developed.

#### IV

Over and beyond the programme innovations, the prime concern of both RSB and the RMC was to develop professional records managers through intensive training and, in conjunction with the Civil Service Commission, to establish a

90 R.G.27, RMC, Minutes, Meeting #35, 25 February 1971; Meeting #36, April 1971; Meeting #30, 20 January 1971; Meeting #42, 22 January 1972; Meeting #48, 31 August 1973.

91 R.G.27, RMC, file Records Management Projects and Activities, RSB "Report", 20 February 1970.

92 R.G.27, RMC, Minutes, Meeting #34, 8 December 1970. For example, Management Services Division Project #180 (Microfilm Practices) 1970 and MSD Project #226 (Forms Management) 1971. R.G.27, RMC, file Projects and Activities. Box 3.

93 R.G.27, RMC, Minutes, Meeting #44, 13 November 1972. And Ontario Regulation 275/73 sec. 6 (d).

94 R.G.27, RMC, Minutes, Meeting #28, 14 October 1969; Meeting #35, 25 February 1971; Meeting #48, 31 August 1973.

95 Each Ministry was required to have a fully operational forms management programme by 31 March 1974.

corresponding professional classification series for records officers. A registry survey in 1971 coupled with regular but informal meetings with departmental records officers revealed classification and function anomalies which were detrimental to programme development at the departmental level.<sup>96</sup> A strong lobby to place records officers in the systems and procedures group was overcome and the RMC was successful in establishing separate classifications for records officers and managers. It was “the decision of the Committee that the records officers of a department should be that person actually charged with the responsibility of doing work on a continuing basis. . . .” and at the urging of the Archivist of Ontario the Committee’s views on this matter were officially communicated to senior departmental managers.<sup>97</sup>

As the records management programme developed, structural alterations were made in its regulatory framework to clarify and update functions, often adding or redistributing responsibilities and confirming devolution of central operation responsibilities from the RMC secretary to the RSB.<sup>98</sup> Such changes kept the programme on an even keel, fully balanced and buoyant in the ebb of administrative necessity and flow of operational requirements. The initial Public Records Directive of 1968 was followed by three successive Regulations, Ont. Reg. 350/70, 370/71 and 275/73 issued under the *Financial Administration Act* and its successor, the *Management Board of Cabinet Act*. These regulations reflected the expansion of records management under the leadership of Archives’ RSB and supported the growing sophistication of the total programme at the departmental level on a government-wide basis. In retrospect, Ont. Reg. 275/73, issued but ten short years after the Archives’ initial programme proposals of 1963-64, represents the apogee of Ontario’s records management programme defining the regulatory, operational and administrative responsibilities of all participants under an expanded definition of Public Records. To “[keep] under constant review the state of the records” by monitoring, regulating and approving schedules, microrecord systems, forms programmes and procedure manuals, the RMC was supported by an operational RSB which not only made frequent and regular recommendations to the Committee on all aspects of records management, but also advised and assisted ministries on scheduling, file systems, variable date forms management; provided education programmes for ministry personnel; ensured compliance with Committee directives; and operated a dormant records centre service. The burden of programme implementation was laid at the ministry level with a professional group of managers who, under the direction of their ministry records management committee, developed and maintained inventorying and scheduling programmes, forms management, classification and declassification systems for sensitive records, maintaining at all times close liaison with RSB on all aspects of records management.<sup>99</sup>

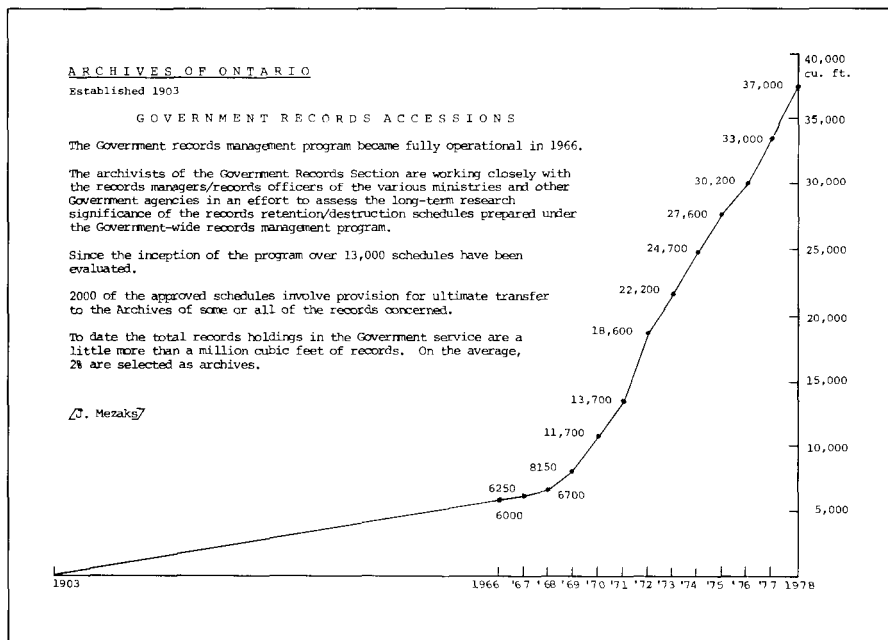
96 R.G.27, RMC, Minutes, Meeting #35, 25 February 1971; Meeting #44, 13 November 1972 discussed details of proposed government-wide records officers and records managers series.

97 R.G.27, RMC, Minutes, Meeting #32, 16 January 1970; Meeting #35, 25 February 1971; Meeting #44, 13 November 1972.

98 Also see R.G.27, RMC, Minutes, Meeting #40, 15 February 1972. RMC recommended to Management Board that full responsibility and authority for operational aspects of the programme be placed with RSB.

99 Ontario Regulation 275/73, section 4, 5 and 6. Also see R.G.17, file Records Management Reorganization, McOuatt to Barnes, 27 January 1976, p. 5.





The intangible achievements of the programme, growing awareness of the importance of records and their proper management as necessary prerequisites for efficient administration, reduced time and effort in locating information and a new, broadly-based appreciation of the greater value of records beyond daily administrative needs are difficult to document but were, nonetheless, important achievements which were genuinely recognized.<sup>100</sup>

Far easier to document were the programme's striking tangible achievements, the growing levels of activity in records management with consequent proven economies. Records retention scheduling not only set up permanent timetables for the orderly retirement of ongoing record series but also moved massive amounts of dormant records out of high cost office space, generating enormous dollar savings. From a modest beginning in 1968 when sixteen records retention schedules were approved by the RMC, 2400 were received in 1970 and this level was maintained up to 1975.<sup>101</sup> The movement of records was enormous. The Archives alone accessioned 4,650 cubic feet in 1970, 2000 cubic feet in 1971, 5,031 cubic feet in 1972 and 4,135 cubic feet in 1973. In the first six years of the records management programme, the government records section of the Archives accessioned more records than it had in the first sixty-three years of its existence. By 31 March 1974 nearly 400,000 cubic feet of records had been either

<sup>100</sup> For examples see R.G.27, RMC, Minutes, Meeting #35, 25 February 1971. Following the Moore Committee's Survey there was a marked increase in requests to the Archives for records appraisals. Since 1965 there has been more frequent government use of archival services for its permanent records. This trend continues.

<sup>101</sup> *Annual Report of the Department of Public Records and Archives, 1970*. On 20 May 1975, Management Board approved a new structure for the records management programme and the RMC, as originally constituted, ceased to exist.

destroyed, transferred to the Records Centre or accessioned by the Archives.<sup>102</sup> The accumulated economic achievement was equally impressive and in 1972 accumulated net savings since 1968 were calculated at \$2,258,153.<sup>103</sup> The overwhelming success of the records management programme was incontestable, justifying the efforts of all participants and vindicating the confidence of its authors. Further achievement seemed inevitable.

Yet from 1972 to 1976, a series of executive fiats dramatically changed the structure of Ontario's records management programme. Both the RMC and RSB as originally constituted were disbanded. Ont. Reg. 275/73 was replaced by a directive in the Manual of Administration. The latter was left as the only vestige of centred involvement with records management, apart from the long existing and still untouched statutory authority over records destruction exercised by the Archivist of Ontario. A chronology of events unfolded with deceptive simplicity.

In the wake of massive government reorganization prompted, in part, by recommendations of the Committee on Government Productivity (COGP), the Department of Public Records and Archives including its RSB was once again shifted within government. This time (1972) the move was to the relatively new Ministry of Colleges and Universities and, at the same time, the departmental title was changed in favour of the Archives of Ontario. On 1 November 1973, RSB was split off from the Archives and placed within the Ministry of Government Services reporting to the Executive Director of the General Services Division following recommendations in a report *Organization of Archives and Record Services* (July 1973) prepared by consultants Peter Barnard Associates.<sup>104</sup> The same firm of consultants prepared a subsequent report, *Role Responsibilities and Relationship of the Records Management Committee* (March 1974) recommending that the Committee "should restrict its activities to policy development, interpretation and monitoring", sever its operational nexus with RSB and "[cease] to ratify each record series schedule developed within the government".<sup>105</sup> The RMC was made inactive upon the retirement of the Chairman and, on 20 May 1975, Management Board approved a new structure for the records management programme by replacing Ont. Reg. 275/73 with a Management Board Policy and rescinding the RMC.<sup>106</sup> The Directive established an Advisory Committee on Records Management (ACORM) with representation from Management Board, RSB, the Archives of Ontario and the newly formed Records Managers Council. The "rump" committee was to make broad policy recommendations to Management Board and review RSB guidelines but had no authority to review and approve or reject records retention schedules.<sup>107</sup> Finally on 3 February 1976, Management Board approved a further

---

102 "Annual Report of RSB, Ministry of Government Services", 1973-74.

103 R.G.17, file R.M.C. Meetings and Reports (1973), Draft Report to Management Board, 1972.

104 R.G.17, file Organizational Splitting of R.S.B. from Archives. McOuat to J.G. Parr, 17 October 1973.

105 R.G.17, file Organisational Status—R.M.C. Peter Barnard Associates. "Role, Responsibilities and Relationship of the Records Management Committee: a Report Prepared for Management Board of Cabinet", 1974, p. iii.

106 R.G.17, file Organisational Status—R.M.C. J.A. Queen to RMC, 6 January 1976; and file R.M.C. General (1974-75). O.M. Berg to RMC, 21 May 1975.

107 R.G.17, file R.M. Reorganization. "Reorganization of Records Management Responsibilities," McOuat to Barnes, 27 January 1976, p. 9.

restructuring of the programme following the recommendations of a Board Report disbanding RSB and transferring or diluting its functions. Records centre operations, common forms design and co-ordination and microfilm advisory services were retained by MGS. Complement and funds were provided for the Archives to ensure that “monitoring of work flow and co-ordination of records schedules [was] maintained” and, subsequently, responsibility for the administration of records management training was added. RSB representation on ACORM was replaced by a Management Board officer who would act as secretary, prepare guidelines for ACORM’s review and co-ordinate the various elements of the records management programme.<sup>108</sup> On 1 April 1976 these recommendations were implemented: “Henceforth, the responsibility for overall co-ordination of the records management programme will be under the Management Policy Division of the Secretariat”.<sup>109</sup>

Such radical changes to what was, by any yardstick, an extraordinarily successful programme inevitably begs the question—why? Why tamper with success? What motives prompted these changes? What administrative logic ordered the new structure? Neither the motivation nor logic supporting the transfiguration of Ontario’s records management programme is clear or straight; rather, as in most things, a complex interaction of many factors produced what appeared to be an incomprehensible abandonment of a successful formula for one which was untried and uncertain. Indeed, it could be argued that the loss of archival control over records management was perhaps more apparent than real given the rather extensive Treasury Board control exerted from the very beginning of the programme. Undeniably, the persistence of George Spragge and his successor Donald McOuat brought a programme of archival records management to the point of action. As originally structured, main operational responsibility was placed with the Archives. Nevertheless, from the beginning there were those who felt that record services, particularly the records centre, should be placed more appropriately within Public Works and its successor, the Ministry of Government Services.<sup>110</sup> Even in the *Moore Report* there was an uneasy feeling that archival and records management purposes were separate, even conflicting, and the proposed administrative union was one of convenience.<sup>111</sup>

Traditionally associated with cultural enterprise, the unique function of the Archives as a service agency was never fully understood or accepted by elements within Treasury Board.<sup>112</sup> Within the bureaucracy the Archives was viewed as an agency with parochial rather than catholic interests, existing to serve a small elite

108 R.G.17, file Organisational Return of some R.M. functions to Archives (1975-76). Report to Management Board, “Records Management”, January 1976.

109 R.G.17, file “Records Management Function”, Berg to Deputy Ministers, 21 April 1976.

110 R.G.17, file Records Branch. Draft report to Treasury Board, 11 January 1963, recommended that the proposed records centre would more appropriately be placed in a “central governmental department supplying . . . common servicing . . .” Also *Moore Supplementary* p. 22. R.G.27, RMC, file Correspondence. O’Neill to Brannan, 15 May 1967. R.G. 17, file Organizational Splitting of R.S.B. from Archives of Ontario, Palmer and Hilliard to Brannan, 3 August 1967.

111 R.G.27, *Moore Report*, p. 25 and *Moore Supplementary*, p. 23.

112 R.G.27, file R.M.C. Operational, O’Neill to Eberlee, 15 May 1972—“The remainder of the Archives of Ontario consists of the Archives Branch with the Historical Branch, the functions of which are oriented to the academic field. Being a repository for the permanent records of government, which have continuing research value, there [sic] function particularly archives are a source of research material for the historians, etc., of the Colleges and Universities.”

whose functions were viewed as tangential to the main purposes of government. Persistent ennui over programme placement was never effectively countered and the supposed conflict of purposes repeatedly cropped up in correspondence and reports to 1976. From the beginning, with the "working" consultant reporting to the Chairman, consummation of the administrative marriage of RSB and Archives was, in effect, postponed until 1969. Even after that date when RSB became fully operational and integrated administratively with the Archives it was customary for both the Archivist and Director of RSB to attend RMC meetings, perpetuating an impression of duality which was never overcome.<sup>113</sup> During the halcyon days of the original programme when there was ample opportunity and presumably strong professional motivation to entrench archival records management within the bureaucratic world view by promoting reciprocity between Archives and the RSB, little was ever done with that clear objective in mind, to tie in statistical bases of service or other programme indicators. Although certain joint records projects were undertaken by RSB and the Archives Branch with striking success, such as the provincial court house inventories, a regularized mechanism of project co-ordination to bring the expertise of each other to bear in reciprocal fashion was never developed.<sup>114</sup> As a Committee of Treasury and later Management Board, the RMC could hardly ignore the vast service potential of the Board's own secretariat and indeed it would have been impractical for the RMC not to use secretariat expertise. As Treasury (Management) Board gained more experience in records management areas, given their powerful position within the bureaucracy and strong corporate sense of self-confident pride, it appears very natural that they would, at some point, press for certain records management functions to be assigned to them. In this potentially volatile situation it was the RMC itself which mediated, moderated and turned into constructive action the apparent and, at times, very real conflicts within the programme itself.<sup>115</sup>

Paradoxically, the tremendous growth of government, one of the significant reasons supporting the initiation of a records management programme was also a factor promoting change in its structure. In general, the Committee on Government Productivity recommended a decentralized structure of government to permit greater scope for individual management action, more careful

113 R.G.17, file Organisational Return of Some R.M. Functions to Archives (1975-76). Report to Management Board, "Records Management", January 1976, refers to the RSB as being originally "associated" with the Archives of Ontario, p. 1, sec. 2.

114 R.G.27, RMC, Minutes, Special Meeting, 19 October 1971 on forms management and central microfilm service for the Ontario Government. Also see R.G.27, file R.M.C. Operational. O'Neill to Eberlee, 15 May 1972. In 1973 the Archives developed an analysis form to provide an accurate statistical picture of Archives Branch activities. Unfortunately, the form failed to unite all records management functions in an emphatic, graphic fashion and its statistical impact was consequently diluted. See R.G.17, file Organizational Splitting—R.S.B. from Archives. Report (copy) Peter Barnard Associates "Organization of Archives and Records Services" marginalia, D.F. McOuat, ca. 1973.

115 For example see R.G.27, RMC, Minutes, Meeting #3, 8 March 1965; Meeting #12, 15 November 1966; Meeting #21, 5 June 1968; Meeting #37, 6 July 1971; Special, 19 October 1971; Meeting #40, 15 February 1972. Decision by consensus failed the committee in one significant instance when mediation could not prevent open conflict—"It was moved by D.F. McOuat that the Committee retain its authority and responsibility to approve or reject records schedules since the signature of the Archivist, if the final signature, does not express a final authority beyond recognition of the Archival or long term historical value of the records. There being no seconder for this motion, it was declared by the chairman as defeated." R.G.27, RMC, Minutes, Meeting #52, 13 May 1974.

separation of regulatory and operational functions discouraging, at the same time, unnecessary pre-audit control of operations.<sup>116</sup> However, much of the records management programme's success to date had been based on these very considerations; strong central control by the Committee which received much of its operating data from the Archives of Ontario's RSB.<sup>117</sup> While not directly controlled by the RMC, RSB certainly operated in a very close relationship to it and, without a doubt, regulations governing approvals for records retention schedules were a species of pre-audit activity. In a period of unprecedented change in government size and structure the application of universal organizational rules became an important technique to ensure administrative continuity. Without a doubt the records management programme was a success, but its structure was unorthodox and in a period of increasing uniformity, the sin of unorthodoxy was perhaps seen as outweighing the virtue of success. Viewed in this light, reorganization would usher the programme into a bureaucratic state of grace.

Growing programme maturity at the ministry level, coupled with the extension of records management to include the important activity of forms management, emphasized a perceived gulf between records management and the Archives. Further placement of the Archives of Ontario in the new Ministry of Culture and Recreation confirmed the widely held view of the Archives as primarily a cultural, academic-oriented agency. Once again the Archivist was placed in a new reporting structure with colleagues and superiors who were unfamiliar with the Archives' broader government service function.<sup>118</sup> A major restructuring of government created new reporting relationships and until these were functioning, unofficial lines of communication understandably assumed a significant rôle in decision making.

The specifics of restructuring had been discussed within Management Board and MGS sometime before the decisions were formally considered by either the Archives of Ontario or the RMC.<sup>119</sup> Whether by design or oversight, failure to officially inform and involve all interested parties from the very beginning in studying the existing records management structure casts a shadow over the motivation for the ultimate decision. Indeed, while the report *Organization of Archives and Records Services* was designated an in-depth study and prepared

---

116 Peter Barnard Associates, "Role, Responsibilities and Relationship of the Records Management Committee. A Report Prepared for Management Board of Cabinet" (March, 1974), p. i. R.G.17, file R.M. Reorganization. "Reorganization of Records Management Responsibilities," McOuat to Barnes, 27 January 1976, p. 8.

117 R.G.27, RMC, Minutes, Meeting #50, 31 January 1974. John Chamard of Peter Barnard Associates was "requested to draft the report . . . to place emphasis on alternatives and means by which the RMC could be provided with some mechanism whereby it can ensure programme effectiveness and thereby formulate and develop records management policy." Also Meeting #51, 11 March 1974 " . . . it was the view of the committee that monitoring the Programme and continuance to approve schedules is necessary to policy formulation."

118 R.G.17, file Organizational Splitting R.S.B. from Archives. McOuat to Parr, 16 October 1973. " . . . I do not believe that the ministry fully understood the primary function of the Archives or the practical operational effect which the splitting would have on the two programmes concerned."

119 First official mention of proposed changes is in Meeting #48, 31 August 1973. "The Chairman introduced the subject of the future rôle and function of the Committee should organizational placement of the RSB out of the Archives of Ontario and within the Ministry of Government Services take place." Yet the report on "Organization of Archives and Record Services" prepared by Peter Barnard Associates was presented in July 1973.

by an external consultant, it bears all the marks of over-hurried preparation and was never officially presented or discussed at the Archives of Ontario, the agency which, most of all, was affected by the report's recommendations.<sup>120</sup> A close and easy working relationship between the Director of RSB and his line superior, the Archivist of Ontario, did remain informally after the split yet, at the same time, RSB was placed in an anomalous position reporting to the Director of the General Services Division and further, providing operational input to the RMC. In October 1973, Peter Barnard Associates were hired by Management Board to "undertake a study of the RMC in the light of recently changed jurisdictional and reporting relationships and to recommend appropriate rationalization of rôles, relationships and functions".<sup>121</sup> In the light of the prevailing management philosophy of "let the manager manage, and its logical extension, the elimination of preaudit activities" the report recommended restructuring the Committee to remove its central power, particularly in reviewing and approving or rejecting records retention schedules.<sup>122</sup>

Neither the splitting of RSB from the Archives nor the reorganization of the RMC fully realized the administrative aims of Management Board and Ministry of Government Services personnel, who were intimately concerned with the structure and future of the programme:<sup>123</sup>

MGS has indicated that it is inappropriate to retain all of the current activities of the RSB within the Ministry. In particular, the development of guidelines, responsibility for monitoring and control of work flow and records management training are outside the accepted rôle of MGS or are more appropriately handled elsewhere. In addition, MGS has expressed the opinion that the records management programme has now developed to a point of maturity where a reduction of some resources is feasible. . . . The Management Board Secretariat supports [that] view. . . . We have been advised by a number of sources including the recent Director of RSB that there has been a decreasing workload on the Branch as a result of the maturity of the programme.<sup>124</sup>

Yet if it can be said RSB was functioning successfully within the Archives, the original decision to transfer RSB to MGS appears ill-conceived and its disbanding illogical. Behind the regulated argument and counter arguments of memoranda and reports throughout these years must have been strong undercurrents of conflicting interests, evidence of broader government consider-

120 The Archivist of Ontario first heard of proposed changes at a regular RMC meeting of 10 September 1973. R.G.17, file Organizational Splitting R.S.B. from Archives of Ontario. McQuat to Parr, 11 September 1973. There is no indication that any meeting was called between #48, 31 August 1974 and #49, 12 November 1974. The Archivist must, therefore, be referring to Meeting #48 of 31 August, not 10 September 1974.

121 Peter Barnard Associates was requested by T.P. Adams, Deputy Minister of Management Board Secretariat, to undertake the "Roles, Responsibilities, and Relationships" study in October 1973 before the RSB/ Archives of Ontario split had been formalized.

122 Peter Barnard Associates, "Roles, Responsibilities and Relationship", Summary of Recommendations #1. Drafts of this report were presented to and discussed by the RMC.

123 R.G.17, file R.M. Reorganization. Undated report to Management Board on R.M. (probably late 1975 or early 1976).

124 *Ibid.*

ations of power and control in which the Archives could not or would not be involved.<sup>125</sup>

The “Sturm und Drang” surrounding the transfiguration of Ontario’s records management programme in the early 1970’s has receded into the past. Putting aside all archival considerations, it is a moot point whether the programme as presently structured will ever be as energetic, as efficient or as effective as its predecessor. The programme has not been destroyed. The original form has been shattered but the fragments have been reunited in a new relationship which works. Gone is the strong central programme control by the RMC exercised through the advice and assistance of a specialized RSB, which was envisioned by two successive Archivists of Ontario. Gone as well, with programme fragmentation, is the elusive but nonetheless real concept of a records continuum from generation to disposal. For a brief period the Archives, as the proper agency for professional commitment to all aspects of that continuum, had genuine administrative and structural expression as the touchstone of records management.

---

125 R.G.17, file Organizational Splitting—R.S.B. from Archives. McOuat to Parr, 17 September 1973 and 16 October 1973. The Ontario Archives’ function “... is unique and it can not carry out its function if... subordinated to the internal requirements of any particular Ministry with which it is associated. It must have sufficient independence to provide equitable service to all government agencies and the Public.” R.G.17, file Organizational Splitting etc., D.F. McOuat, Marginalia on Peter Barnard Associates’ report *Organization of Archives and Records Services* (July, 1973). A xerox copy of this report was received by the Archivist in late September 1973.

## Résumé

Par leurs efforts continus, les archivistes provinciaux George Spragge et Donald McOuat ont réussi à mettre sur pied un système de gestion de documents pour le gouvernement de l’Ontario en 1966. Sous l’égide d’un Comité de gestion de documents du Conseil du Trésor et avec l’appui des archives, lesquelles comprenaient alors un centre de documents inactifs et une division d’archives administratives, un programme fut mis en marche par un nouveau groupe de gestionnaires professionnels. En dépit du succès croissant de ce programme, il fut relegué dans l’ombre, lors d’une série de changements administratifs complexes au début des années 1970. Le comité central et la division d’archives administratives furent démembrés et le programme s’inséra dans une structure encore inexpérimentée.