

## *From the Editor:*

### **W. KAYE LAMB, ARCHIVES, AND LIBRARIES**

The Editors of *Archivaria* are pleased to honour W. Kaye Lamb, former Dominion Archivist and National Librarian, with a special issue of the journal. Kaye Lamb did more than any other individual in Canadian history in the combined fields of archives, libraries, and historical scholarship and is evidently worthy of a *festschrift* in his honour. Yet *Archivaria* would not have published these essays had they been lacking in scholarly merit. Their contribution to archival studies is twofold.

In the first place, archivists too often neglect their own history. They forget, or do not value, the adage that "past is prologue," that a clear understanding of our development is the prerequisite for setting future priorities. The author of a recent piece on American archival history rightly declared that extensive knowledge of a profession's history "is often utilized in current controversies and debates and experimentation with new techniques and methodologies."<sup>1</sup> Historians have repeatedly recognized this, but archivists, despite their historical training, generally have not. With six parallel essays on archives and their sister institution, libraries, before, during, and after Lamb, this historiographical oversight is partially rectified in the following pages. As well, the evaluation of Kaye Lamb's personal contribution adds an important biographical focus to this institutional development over time.

Secondly, the numerous parallels in these essays between the archival and library professions will prove instructive for the former group. Compare, for example, the nature of the Downs and Williams Reports on libraries in the 1960s with those by Symons and Wilson on archives in the 1970s. Compare the national institutions; notice that archives virtually started at the centre and that the Public Archives of Canada still overwhelms the national system in terms of people and dollars (*vide* Wilson); conversely, libraries started in the cities, universities, and regions and only belatedly did a central focus emerge with the foundation of the National Library in 1953. Compare the sophisticated lobbying and many great accomplishments of the Canadian Library Association in the late 1940s with the more tentative initiatives of the Association of Canadian Archivists in the late 1970s. Compare the moves by libraries ten to fifteen years ago towards standardization and networking with what faces archivists today. Compare especially the cooperative partnership between the

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1 Richard J. Cox, "American Archival History: Its Development, Needs, and Opportunities," *American Archivist* 46, no. 1 (Winter 1983): 40-41.

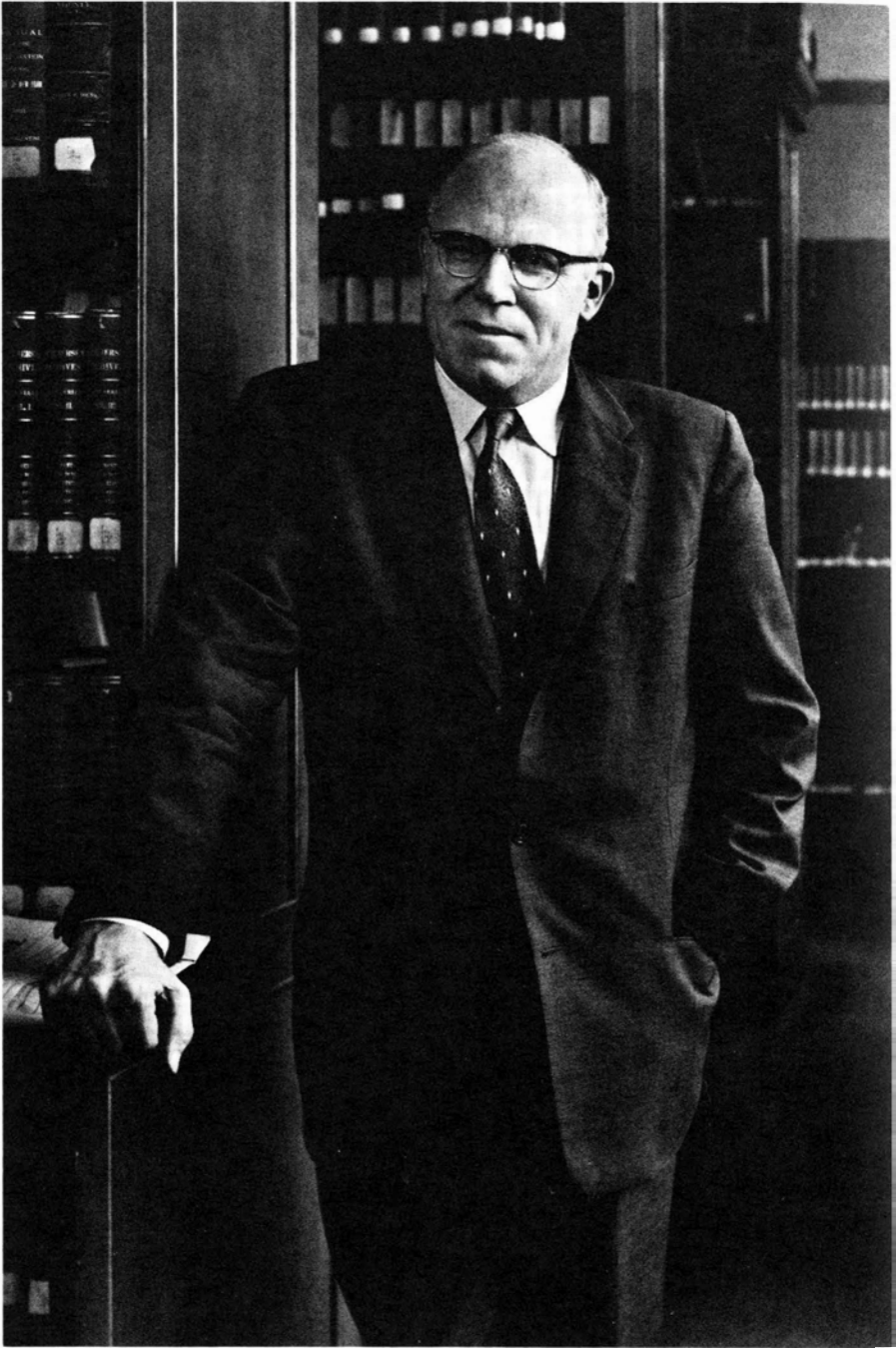
national professional association and the national institution in the library field with the less congenial relationship in the archival sphere. These similarities and differences should stimulate reflection, perhaps shake some complacency, certainly instruct, and also engender optimism, for others have also travelled successfully the rocky road now before archivists as they try to build a national network.

Kaye Lamb was one of the leading Canadians of his generation. The essays which follow honour his stellar contributions to archives and libraries and provide no little inspiration to those who follow in his footsteps.<sup>2</sup>

Terry Cook  
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2 Other essays could doubtless assess Lamb's significant work as a Canadian historian, especially his many contributions to the history of his native province, British Columbia (*vide* "Bibliography" below), and as a skilled editor of historical documents, but regrettably these fall outside the scope of the present volume.



Dr. W. Kaye Lamb, Dominion Archivist and National Librarian, May 1957. Karsh, Ottawa (reproduced with permission).