

“A Noble Dream”: The Origins of the Public Archives of Canada

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The Canadian archival tradition places considerable emphasis on the responsibility of government to preserve cultural resources. Unlike their counterparts in Europe and the United States, Canadian governmental archives, national, provincial and municipal, preserve not just the official administrative records but also acquire private materials in all documentary media bearing on the history of their area. Such broad mandates lead our government archives to combine the traditional role of a record office with that of an active cultural agency interacting with the community around it. The Public Archives of Canada provided the model for this approach to archival service; and the reasons for this blending of archival roles, its full potential and its inherent difficulties can best be understood through the experience of the national archives.

The Public Archives of Canada, formally recognized by statute in 1912, sprang from two nineteenth-century institutional roots, each embodying a different archival tradition. Its immediate predecessor, the Archives Branch of the Department of Agriculture, reflected the forces which led to its foundation in 1872 by emphasizing the cultural value of all forms of historical documentation. In 1903, ending a rivalry of thirty years, the Archives had absorbed the Records Branch of the Department of the Secretary of State, with its traditional concern for the administrative records of government. On his appointment the following year, Arthur G. Doughty was formally styled “Dominion Archivist and Keeper of the Records,” reflecting the new dual role of the Archives. Under Doughty and his colleague and successor, Gustave Lanctôt, the Archives developed to the full the cultural and scholarly aspect of its mandate, but faltered in establishing a government records programme. The task remained to reconcile and balance these two functions within the one institution, a challenge only successfully met by their successor, Dr. W. Kaye Lamb.

Unlike most other national archives, the Public Archives of Canada was not established primarily as a government records office. Rather, its intellectual origins can be traced directly to the formation of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec in 1824. With the enthusiastic vice-regal patronage of Lord Dalhousie, this society took as its sole purpose historical research and the recovery and publication of documents on Canadian history. The explanation for this emphasis was given in the society’s public circular:

It will raise us in the moral and intellectual scale of nations. It will

cherish our noblest feelings of honor and patriotism, by showing that the more men become acquainted with the history of their country, the more they prize and respect both their country and themselves.¹

The society began an active programme of research and publication, assisted in 1832 by the first of a series of grants from the Legislative Assembly of Quebec. Members of the society visited Paris, London and New York in their efforts to locate and transcribe historical documents relating to Canada. The society was becoming a quasi-official historical agency and even the manuscripts copied in Paris in 1845 by Louis-Joseph Papineau at the expense of the province were deposited with the society. The legislature, though, assumed a more direct role in developing a provincial collection of historical documents following the 1849 fire in the Montreal parliament building. The assistant clerk of the assembly, G.B. Faribault (a former president of the Literary and Historical Society) provided the initiative, and the Library of Parliament became, in the 1850s, the repository for all historical manuscripts copied by the government. Fortunately, these and the documents gathered by the Literary and Historical Society survived the 1854 fire in the Quebec parliament building. Over the next fifteen years, the parliamentary library committee both accepted original historical collections for preservation in the library and provided financial assistance to researchers gathering source material on the settlement of Upper Canada.²

Canada was not the only province interested in such matters prior to Confederation. In Nova Scotia, historians like T.C. Haliburton and T.B. Akins found research a frustrating process. In 1841, Akins interested the Halifax Mechanics Institute in developing a depository for provincial records. Little resulted until the legislature, on a motion from Joseph Howe, recognized the need to preserve and arrange "the ancient records and documents illustrative of the History and progress of Society in this Province." T.B. Akins was appointed Records Commissioner in 1857, a post he held until his death thirty-five years later.³

Confederation brought with it the excitement of nation building and the problems of linking the separate historical traditions of each of the provinces. That historical writing and the evolution of a national consciousness were inextricably linked seemed commonplace. John Stuart Mill emphasized the connection by pinpointing as the strongest factor generating a sense of nationality the "identity of political antecedents; the possession of a national history, and consequent recollections; collective pride and humiliation, pleasure and regret, connected with the same incidents in the past."⁴ D'Arcy McGee in 1865 voiced the opinion of many of his contemporaries in saying that "Patriotism will increase in Canada as its history is read."⁵ Such sentiments were certainly not new to the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec. Within a few years of Confederation, the Society took

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- 1 Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, "Address to the Public" as printed in *The Centenary Volume of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, 1824-1924* (Quebec, 1924), p. 167.
 - 2 The early history of archival activity in Upper and Lower Canada is described in J. Edmond Roy, "Les Archives du Canada à venir à 1872," *Mémoires de la Société Royale du Canada*, 3rd series (1916), pp. 57-123.
 - 3 Charles Bruce Fergusson, *The Public Archives of Nova Scotia*, Bulletin no. 19 of the Public Archives of Nova Scotia, (Halifax, 1963), pp. 10-13.
 - 4 John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism, Liberty, Representative Government* (London, 1910), p. 360.
 - 5 As quoted in Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power* (Toronto, 1974), p. 93.

the initiative in bringing archival concerns to the attention of the new federal authorities. One of their members, Dr. H.H. Miles, addressed the society in December 1870, stressing the dangers to which the scattered accumulations of official records were exposed.⁶ The society responded with petitions addressed to both the Governor General and the House of Commons. Signed by authors, clergy, and leading educators in Quebec City and Montreal, these petitions explained the importance of rendering public records conveniently accessible and securing them from accidental destruction. They also focussed on one of the central concerns facing the new Confederation:

That, considering the divers origins, nationalities, religious creeds, and classes of persons represented in Canadian society, the conflicting nature of the evidence proffered by authors in presenting the most important points and phases of our past local history, as well as the greater need which a rapidly progressive people have to base the lessons derivable from their history upon facts duly authenticated in place of mere hearsay or statements only partially correct, and, in the absence of documentary proof, coloured conformably to the political and religious bias or the special motives which may happen to animate the narrator of alleged facts, the undersigned desire to express their conviction that the best interests of Society in this country would be consulted by establishing a system, with respect to Canadian Archives, correspondent with those which have been adverted to in relation to Great Britain, France and the United States.⁷

The petition received the strong endorsement of the Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament to whom the Commons had referred it; but the committee left it to the Minister of Agriculture, responsible for "Arts and manufactures," to take action.⁸ The result was prompt albeit hesitant. The government approved the new programme later in 1871, adding four thousand dollars to the estimates for 1872. On 20 June 1872, Douglas Brymner, a well-known Montreal journalist, was appointed as a "Senior Second Class Clerk" in the Department of Agriculture, with an annual salary of twelve hundred dollars.⁹ Born in Scotland, Brymner had moved from business to farming to journalism, becoming editor of *The Presbyterian*, associate editor of the Montreal *Daily Herald* and President of the Press Gallery in Ottawa.¹⁰ At the age of forty-two, he now embarked upon a new career with no formal title, three empty rooms and with some expectation that the Archives would be a part-time job.

Brymner entered upon his new tasks with a minimum of theory but considerable enthusiasm. In his first year, he visited Toronto, Montreal, Quebec, Halifax, Saint John and Fredericton, reporting on the state of various accumulations of

6 H.H. Miles, "On 'Canadian Archives,'" *Transactions of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec* (Quebec, 1871), pp. 53-71.

7 Public Archives of Canada (hereafter PAC), Records of the Public Archives of Canada, RG 37, vol. 104.

8 Canada, House of Commons, *Journals*, 24 March 1871, pp. 138-39, and 12 and 13 April 1871, pp. 288-89.

9 PAC, Records of the Privy Council Office, RG 2, series 1, P.C. 712, 20 June 1872

10 See D.C. Harvey, "Douglas Brymner, 1823-1902," *Canadian Historical Review*, 24 (September 1943): 249-52.

government records. He recognized the difficulties of sorting through the pre-Confederation records to determine which were properly federal and which affected provincial responsibilities. He also learned that many significant documents had found their way into the hands of private individuals and proved difficult to trace.¹¹ He was impressed with the work of T.B. Akins in Halifax, and found the Nova Scotia archivist attempting to stop the removal of a major series of military records which had been sent down from Quebec on their way to England.¹² Brymner enlisted the support of the federal authorities and in September 1873 the British government directed that the records be transferred to the nascent Archives Branch in Ottawa.¹³

The year 1873 proved a hectic one for archival activity. Brymner spent the first several months in England, examining records in the British Museum, the Hudson's Bay Company and various government departments. Dr. J.B. Hurlbert was hired to conduct a preliminary assessment of the military records in Halifax. Later in the year, on instructions from the Minister of Agriculture, he mailed circulars to over four hundred people in Ontario seeking records on the early history of the province.¹⁴ In the fall, and through most of 1874, Abbé H.A.B. Verrault, President of the Montreal Historical Society, visited repositories in London and Paris, noting documents relevant to Canadian history.¹⁵

The general reconnaissance of historical collections needed to plan the Archives' programme proceeded rapidly in these first eighteen months. Then the initiative faltered. Brymner withdrew into the Archives and for the next several years occupied himself with arranging and listing his one major collection: the British War Office records. His reports for 1875, 1876, 1877 and 1878 dwindled to a few paragraphs; his own letterbooks grew thin; and nothing was done to copy the records listed overseas. In later years, Brymner explained that he "kept everything as quiet as possible, until some progress had been made in the work of collecting and arranging."¹⁶ But all of Brymner's reports and correspondence reflected a staunch loyalty to his departmental superiors; and one can surmise that the economic conditions and political priorities of the Mackenzie administration offered little to the emerging Archives.

With the return of more favourable conditions in 1878, Brymner was at least able to begin a modest copying programme at the British Museum, starting with the Haldimand Collection. But valuable time had been lost. A literary convention held

11 Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1873, no. 26, Report of the Minister of Agriculture, Appendix 29, Archives, pp. 171-74. The annual reports of the Archives Branch were first published as part of the reports of the Department of Agriculture. From 1881 onward the Archives published a separate report. Full details are provided in *Guide to the Reports of the Public Archives of Canada 1872-1972* (Ottawa, 1975). For simplicity, the annual reports will be referred to hereafter as Archives Report for _____.

12 PAC, RG 37, vol. 116, T.B. Akins to Joseph Howe, 17 April 1872. (Sent to Brymner by Akins, 26 May 1890).

13 PAC, RG 37, vol. 104, J.C. Vivian (War Office) to Lt.-General Commanding, Halifax, 22 September 1873.

14 *Ibid.*, J.B. Hurlbert to John Lowe, 15 September 1873.

15 See the Archives Reports for 1873 and 1874 for Brymner's and Verrault's reports on their discoveries.

16 Archives Report for 1889, p. xiii.

in Ottawa in October 1877 petitioned the government to collect public documents, and the following year the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec called on the government to provide

the necessary legislation to create a Public Record Office under a responsible head at Ottawa, and take the necessary steps to have copied and gathered there the archives of Canada, scattered in Canada, as well as in other lands.¹⁷

Indeed, in 1882, the originator of the 1871 petition, Dr. H.H. Miles, wrote:

Nor are we any better off, so far as I know, as to convenient access than we were ten years ago when there was some agitation on the subject and when a numerously signed petition was presented to the Legislature ... which petition although it was the occasion of annual grants of money, professedly in promotion of the objects of the petitioners, has, substantially remained unproductive of the results sought to be secured.¹⁸

Such comments could only fuel Brymner's frustration. This would never disappear but, from 1880 onward, the Archives Branch perceptibly gathered momentum. The Archives' vote advanced from merely covering Brymner's salary in 1877-78 to over \$4,600 in 1879-80, to a plateau of about \$8,000 per year from 1884 until 1897. Under the parsimonious eye of a Scot trained in business, the scope of archival activity gradually expanded.

Brymner's acquisition policy endeavoured to place the earlier sporadic efforts to copy Canadian materials in Britain and Europe on a more systematic basis. In 1881, he surveyed the holdings of the British Museum and the Public Record Office, reporting on the importance of a thorough inventory of documents relevant to Canada in planning the overall copying programme. And, for the next two decades, much of his time was spent supervising the copyists. He visited Britain on several occasions, noting in his reports the wide range of materials awaiting copying. Between visits, he maintained a continuous correspondence with the Canadian High Commission in London, directing, querying and verifying every detail in the accumulating flow of transcripts. When faced, first, with strict British access regulations, and then with the requirement that certain unfavourable passages be omitted from the copies without indicating such editing, Brymner's vehement defence of the integrity of the historical record showed that the journalist had indeed emerged as an archivist.¹⁹ The copying programme expanded to Paris in 1883 with the appointment of Joseph Marmette as Assistant Archivist, who remained in Paris to supervise initial work in the various French archives. The following year, a more modest copying programme was begun in Rome. The gradual results of this patient process, carefully bound and shelved, were made known through the extensive

17 Canada, House of Commons, *Journals*, 28 March 1878, and 10 April 1879. The Society's petition is printed in "The Archives of Canada," *Transactions of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec* (Quebec, 1880), pp. 3-6.

18 PAC, RG 37, vol. 105, H.H. Miles to Brymner, 14 April 1882.

19 See PAC, RG 37, vol. 181, Brymner to Under Secretary of State for Colonies, 13 June 1883, and Brymner to Hon. R.H. Meade, Colonial Office, 10 April 1884.

calendars which Brymner compiled — “as a relaxation from the drudgery of indexing” — and published with his annual reports.

While Brymner continued and amplified the now traditional manuscript copying programmes in Europe, he evolved a far broader vision of the potential role of the Canadian Archives. He described it as a “noble dream;” one which his successors have shared and elaborated upon in the century since. He based it not upon a developed theory of archival science, nor on the nationalism of the 1872 petition on archives. Rather, institutional rivalries within the federal public service combined with his own view of research needs led Brymner to meld the various elements of British and European archival practice into one archival programme.

Brymner’s “noble dream” received its first and most complete expression in the Archives’ reports for 1881, 1882 and 1883. In the first, he contented himself with a detailed description of the history and operation of the British Public Record Office, the Historical Manuscripts Commission and the Register Office in Edinburgh. In the months following the submission of this report, Brymner was forced to define more clearly the role he envisioned for the Archives. Noting that much of the Archives’ effort was a simple continuation of the traditional overseas copying programme, the Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament tabled a report recommending that all documents copied or obtained by the Archives Branch be permanently deposited in the Library of Parliament.²⁰ Brymner responded in his annual report for 1882. After distinguishing between the functions of a public archives and a library primarily intended to serve Members of Parliament, Brymner revealed the full scope of his plan. Elements of three British institutions, the British Museum, the Public Record Office and the Historical Manuscripts Commission, were to be combined in the Canadian Archives. He stressed the importance of documenting all aspects of Canadian society, rejecting any emphasis on political life. “The special object of the office,” Brymner declared, “is to obtain from all sources, private as well as public, such documents as may throw light on social, commercial, municipal, as well as purely political history.”²¹ His ambition was stated succinctly: “...in so far as regards the history of British North America, every document relating to it should be found in the Archives Office, even such as at first sight may appear to have with it only a remote connection.”²²

The claims of the Library of Parliament were quickly extinguished with a few remarks by Sir John A. Macdonald in the House of Commons. But the vision held with such assurance by Brymner underlies much of Canadian archival development. Founded in response to petitions emphasizing cultural and literary needs, the Archives Branch from its first year sought both public and private materials. Any distinction between the two seemed invalid in colonial society. The integrity of some of the official records of the province of Canada had already been disrupted by a series of moves and fires. In any event, such records were only part of Canada’s archival heritage. The papers of colonial administrators which Brymner examined in the British Museum showed a thorough mixture of official and personal documents. Each complemented the other. Certainly for Brymner, Canadian

20 Canada, House of Commons, *Journals*, 9 May 1882, p. 417.

21 Archives Report for 1882, p. 6.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 7.

history involved more than the official actions of government, but in colonial society few families or corporations had the tradition or continuity to preserve its muniments. This, therefore, became the duty of a public archives. To Brymner, such factors overrode the careful distinctions and confirmed the necessity of a comprehensive approach to archival service.

This rationale for the Archives' programme was of particular importance to Brymner in combatting the claims of his main institutional rival, the Records Branch of the Department of Secretary of State. This branch represented the traditional concern of government to preserve its essential records for administrative or legal purposes, whether or not these were ever made available for public research. In the Canadian context, this tradition can be traced to New France, with a proposal for the appointment of a custodian of the archives in 1724 and a suggestion by the Intendant, Gilles Hocquart, for a special archives building in 1731.²³ The Legislative Council of Quebec passed an ordinance in 1790 "For the Better Preservation and due Distribution of the Ancient French Records" to gather records concerning property and "to give a cheap and easy access to them."²⁴ Such initiatives were sporadic and isolated. At Confederation, the Department of the Secretary of State was assigned the traditional chancellery responsibility "to keep all State records and papers not specially transferred to other Departments...."²⁵ The first report of this department listed as one of its duties "The safe keeping and classification of the archives."²⁶ Had the petitions of the Quebec Literary and Historical Society in 1871 been referred to the Secretary of State for action rather than the Minister of Agriculture, the Archives would undoubtedly have developed more as a public record office. However, with Brymner's vague archival mandate, the two clashed immediately. In his report for 1871, Brymner called attention to an important accumulation of official records in the vaults of the former Government House in Montreal. Brymner immediately began discussions with the Quebec government to ascertain jurisdiction. But his federal colleagues proved more effective rivals and, in the final days of the Macdonald ministry, an order-in-council promoted Henry J. Morgan in the Department of the Secretary of State and authorized him to retrieve these records from Montreal and to begin the process of arranging and classifying them. This was in due course confirmed by the new Mackenzie administration.²⁷ Thus began three decades of confused responsibility, personal frustration and not a little acrimony.

Neither Brymner nor Morgan were given either formal mandate or title. The reports of the Records Branch are sparse and relatively little is known of its activities. It did not evolve into an active public records office, seemingly concentrating on the records of its own department. But its existence neutralized Brymner's repeated pleas for the establishment of a records office as part of the Archives Branch. From Brymner's many memoranda countering the claims of the Records Branch and from his several reports on records practices overseas, it can be inferred that senior authorities chose to ignore his concerns.

23 E. Richard, "Summary of Decisions in Paris" in Archives Report for 1904, p. 49.

24 30 George III, Cap. 8.

25 31 Victoria, Cap. 42.

26 Canada, House of Commons, *Sessional Papers*, No. 14, 1869, p. 2.

27 PAC, P.C. 1497, 31 October 1873, cancelled by P.C. 278, 7 April 1874; reinstated by P.C. 1016, 10 August 1874.

The initiative to resolve this “scandal of all order loving minds,” was eventually taken by Joseph Pope, former secretary to Sir John A. Macdonald and Under Secretary of State in the Laurier administration. In a private letter to the prime minister shortly after Laurier took office, Pope reviewed the rivalry between the Archives and Records Branches in comic opera terms, noting the arrival of yet another claimant, the Clerk of the Privy Council who had styled himself “Custodian of State Papers.” This duplication of effort was both confusing and expensive. With the pressing need to dispose of the growing accumulation of departmental records, Pope proposed the consolidation of these efforts into a public record office.²⁸ The urgency of his recommendation was underscored within a few months by a fire which destroyed a substantial quantity of records in the top floor of the West Block. Pope, together with the Deputy Minister of Finance and the Auditor General, were immediately appointed as a departmental commission to survey and report on the state of government records. The commissioners confirmed Pope’s less formal advice, adding that a fire-proof building should be constructed for the consolidated archives. While they took as their model the British Public Record Office, they suggested that Brymner’s broader approach be continued by empowering the new Deputy Keeper of the Records to obtain archival material from private sources.²⁹ The report was tabled in the House of Commons and was well received in the press, but here the matter lay for several years.

Brymner had grown old in the public service. It was a measure of the respect that his efforts had earned that the government hesitated to add to his burdens. Recognition had come slowly for Brymner’s often lonely struggle. But as the historical profession emerged and turned its attention to the serious study of Canadian history, it found the basis of an archives in Ottawa directed by a colleague eager to respond to any inquiry. The interaction augured well both for the future of the Archives and for Canadian historiography. William Kingsford set the tone in spending many hours with Brymner in preparing his ten-volume *History of Canada* (published 1887 to 1898). He quickly became a staunch defender of the Archives and devoted a lengthy pamphlet to assisting Brymner in his struggles with rival federal institutions.³⁰ Through the 1880s American historians drew heavily on the Canadian Archives, praising its collections and its archivists. In 1888, Brymner addressed the American Historical Association, sharing with them his “noble dream.” They responded with warm tributes, and used the Canadian example in their long campaign to establish a national archives in the United States. Courses in Canadian history and the other essential elements of a profession only evolved in Canadian universities in the 1890s, but students and faculty soon made use of the results of Brymner’s work. Recognition and honours followed — an honorary doctorate from Queen’s University (1892) and election as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada (1895).

The archivist, Brymner wrote, “must not forget that he is only the pioneer, whose duty is to clear away obstructions; the cultivated fields will follow.”³¹ The physical

28 PAC, MG 30 E 86, vol. 6, Sir Joseph Pope Papers, Pope to Laurier, 26 October 1896, and Pope to R.W. Scott, 7 January 1897.

29 PAC, Records of the Departmental Commission appointed to enquire into and report upon the state of Public Records, 1897, RG 35, 1, vol. 1.

30 William Kingsford, *Canadian Archaeology* (Montreal, 1886).

31 Archives Report for 1888, p. 4.

results of his work, the inspiration of his “noble dream,” and his sense of common purpose with the historical community long survived his death in 1902. He had won the institutional rivalries. It was his vision and tradition which would inspire the new Public Archives of Canada which followed him.

Joseph Pope continued to take the initiative, reminding the government of the recommendation of the 1897 departmental commission and urging the necessity of reform. Pope also found that his concerns were shared by the Governor General, Lord Minto, whose personal curiosity about historical matters made him sensitive to the state of Canadian archival documentation. Sir Wilfrid Laurier soon received a vice-regal prod about “what I can only call the most lamentable disregard for the historical archives of the Dominion.”³² The 1897 commission’s recommendations were largely implemented later in 1903. The positions of Dominion Archivist and Keeper of the Records were formally recognized and amalgamated. Only a person with “experience in historical research, particularly as regards the history of Canada” could be appointed to this new position, still within the Department of Agriculture. Except for the records in the Privy Council Office, all historical files designated by the commission were ordered transferred to the Archives “for greater safety in their preservation and convenience in referring thereto.”³³ Planning was begun for the Archives’ building on Sussex Street (now Drive). On 16 May 1904 Arthur G. Doughty was appointed Dominion Archivist and Keeper of the Public Records, with the mandate to combine the two functions in one institution.

Born in England in 1860 and educated at Oxford, Doughty had emigrated to Canada at the age of twenty-six. After several years as a drama critic for the *Montreal Gazette*, Doughty entered the Quebec Civil Service, finally serving as Joint Librarian of the Legislative Library for three years before his appointment at Ottawa. Doughty’s views on Canadian historiography were formed in the Quebec milieu. His own special interests were in the history of Quebec City and the 1759 campaign. However, in the broader national context, he saw the divisive role competing French and English interpretations of the past played in contemporary affairs. These differences he attributed to a lack of original source material; as Dominion Archivist he devoted the remainder of his life to remedying this defect.

Doughty entered upon his tasks with determined zeal, planning and inaugurating new archival programmes for collecting and publishing documents, while encouraging historians to make use of them. His conviction that “Nothing will develop true patriotism sooner than a love for the past history of the country”³⁴ echoed the spirit of the Quebec Literary and Historical Society and expressed the expectation of many of his contemporaries. His extensive and discursive annual reports for 1904 and 1905 began with this premise and provided the rationale for increased archival activity. His favourite theme, the changing methods of historical research and the importance of archives in this new historiography, received prominence in these reports and throughout his career. Drawing from the trends in European, British and American historical writing and liberally quoting or paraphrasing Lord Acton and the editors of *The Cambridge Modern History*, Doughty reiterated this theme

32 PAC, Sir Wilfrid Laurier Papers, MG 26, G, pp. 69288-69294, Minto to Laurier, 19 January 1903; see also PAC, Pope Papers, Pope to Maj. L.S. Maude, Government House, 15 January 1903.

33 PAC, P.C. 2018, 7 December 1903.

34 PAC, Lord Minto Papers, MG 27, II B1, vol. 11, p. 84, Doughty to Minto, 9 December 1904.

tirelessly. The old writing he characterized as “a picturesque presentation of the outward and visible signs — the landmarks of history — in which facts were subordinate to the temper or inclination of the writer.”³⁵ In contrast, he described contemporary trends in historical research, as “the construction of history on scientific principles,” with specialized monographs firmly rooted in authentic sources leading eventually toward an “ultimate history.”³⁶ To accomplish this grand design would require active governmental participation. Individuals could no longer hope to produce acceptable histories without full, open and convenient access to archives. The new historiography imposed new responsibilities on government:

Papers are gathered and preserved at the public expense, which at one time would have been left to private enterprise; and facilities of access are now demanded where they would once have been accorded solely as a favour.³⁷

On this premise, Doughty's first reports outlined a broad cultural programme, emphasizing that the Archives' primary mission was to encourage historical research. He considered the existing holdings of the Archives inadequate. To write the type of history he envisioned would require convenient access to a wider range of source material, gathered from both within Canada and overseas. To begin, he embarked on the preparation of a research guide to all archival material relating to Canada. This would be of obvious assistance to research, but it would also place the Archives' copying and acquisition programme on a more systematic basis. He also urged that the Archives' traditional copying programmes in London and Paris be considerably expanded and that other relevant collections in Spain, Italy and the United States be copied for the collection in Ottawa. And he proposed that the same technique be applied coast to coast to centralize the most significant records of the Dominion. Copying, though, would not be his only method of adding to historical resources. A trip to England in 1904 convinced him that with a little effort many “priceless treasures” in the hands of the descendants of governors and colonial officials would be given to the nation. The Archives would also be a public record office and Doughty noted that the records designated by the 1897 commission and the 1903 order-in-council would be transferred on completion of the new Archives' building.

The preparation of a full guide to the sources of Canadian history and Doughty's plans to acquire material through copying, soliciting donations and the transfer of government records were but the first steps in his overall plan to encourage historical writing. This was “replenishing the storehouse,” to use his phrase. He also recognized the need for a means of distribution. His access policies were liberal and in both 1904 and 1905 reports he urged the need to have the Archives' reading room open in the evenings. To reach those outside Ottawa, Doughty reexamined Brymner's practice of publishing calendars of series being copied in London and Paris. These he found time-consuming and, as they were often published years before the documents were actually copied, they were misleading. Instead, Doughty advocated publishing the full texts on particular themes rather than enticing

35 Archives Report for 1904, p. vii.

36 Archives Report for 1905, p. xiii.

37 Archives Report for 1904, p. viii.

calendar entries for them. The stages of locating, acquiring, describing and making available a comprehensive archival collection all led to Doughty's final proposal: the eventual publication of a scholarly national history by the universities in cooperation with the federal government.

Doughty's grand vision went far beyond the Archives' modest resources. By the summer of 1906, discouraged by the hesitating growth of the Archives and the lack of competent assistance, Doughty stood on the verge of resignation. As a final gesture, he appealed directly to the Prime Minister. In a blunt ten-page letter, he set forth his views on the importance of the Archives to the country, linking the needs of critical historiography to the development of the national spirit. The alternatives were clear:

It appears to me that we have arrived at a stage where, with an accurate knowledge of the state and use of public records, and of the requirements of the spirit of the age, two courses are open to us — either to allow the archives to remain a practically useless branch of the public service, or to make it, as it may be made, an important factor in the development of our national life....³⁸

Doughty rehearsed his previous arguments, linking the requirements of the Archives and professional historiography to the popular demand for a unifying, unbiased Canadian history. By so doing, Doughty appealed directly to Laurier's central objective: "...to consolidate Confederation and to bring our people long estranged from each other, gradually to become a nation. This is the supreme issue. Everything else is subordinate to that idea...."³⁹ In the Archives' programme, Doughty was offering a cultural parallel to the economic programmes known as the National Policy.

Doughty made no secret of his intention to resign and the reaction from the parliamentary opposition, the press and his academic colleagues showed that his arguments for an active archival programme had wide support. In July 1906, when the government moved supplementary estimates for the Archives, the reply from a normally parsimonious Opposition was praise for Doughty and criticism of the government for not providing him with adequate support. The press echoed these comments, the *Toronto News* publishing the opposition criticism and noting that "the public men who have an eye for anything higher than the mere material things have suffered a real scare that Dr. Doughty be lost to the public service."⁴⁰ Doughty's arguments had indeed struck a responsive chord and over the ensuing year both academics and journalists confirmed his basic premises. Professor Adam Shortt addressed the Dominion Educational Association on "The Educational Value from a National Point of View of the Canadian Archives."⁴¹ His sentiments found expression in both the *Toronto Globe* and the *Montreal Gazette* with affirmations that "the only patriotism that is worthy of the name must be rooted and

38 PAC, Laurier Papers, p. 112650, Doughty to Laurier, 4 August 1906.

39 Private letter, 1904. As quoted in G.P. de T. Glazebrook, *A History of Canadian Political Thought* (Toronto, 1966), p. 173.

40 C.F. Hamilton, "House Studies Archives Branch," *Toronto News*, 9 July 1906.

41 Summary in *Proceedings of the Sixth Convention, 1907*, Dominion Educational Association (Toronto, 1908), p. 79.

grounded in historical knowledge."⁴² Other university historians were also fully conscious of the importance of the changes Doughty was attempting to implement. In an article on "Patriotism and History," Professor C.W. Colby referred to the neglected state of the Archives and urged "the time has come to render it *cultural* in a broad and national sense."⁴³ Both George Wrong and Adam Shortt pressed the case for an expanded Archives on the Prime Minister and discussed with him the best methods of establishing ties between the Archives and "the educational life of the country."⁴⁴

Laurier's reply to Doughty was brief, but marked a turning point in the development of the Public Archives: "I am ready to cooperate with you and your minister in everything that you will recommend in the line of ideas you express."⁴⁵

Articulate and firm in justifying and explaining the cultural importance of the Archives, Doughty faced imposing administrative and technical tasks with much less assurance. A new phase in the development of the Archives was beginning, but little in Doughty's background had prepared him for it. Drama critic, journalist, librarian and historian — none of these occupations had readied him for the chores of administering a rapidly growing government agency nor had they given him experience in coping with voluminous accumulations of federal records and private papers. Doughty himself recognized that his archival talents lay elsewhere. On his recommendation, the government established the Historical Manuscripts Commission bringing together five historians to advise and to assist Doughty in establishing archival **policy**.⁴⁶ In effect, the informal lobby which had supported Doughty in his first years was given recognition. From 1907 to 1915, the commission held regular meetings, discussing many matters of archival administration, from the classification system, to organizational structure, to attempting "to relieve the Archives Branch from the incubus of political appointments."⁴⁷ The commission, though, had as its one continuing concern the publication of historical documents. The order-in-council establishing the commission emphasized this purpose, which the cabinet considered to be "in the interest of historical science and the development of a national spirit."⁴⁸ The commission quickly confirmed Doughty's decision to halt the publication of calendars and to focus instead on a series of documentary publications. The first of the new volumes was already in hand: *Documents Relating to the Constitutional History of Canada, 1759-1791*. The topic was appropriate and timely, linking the Archives to one of the principal contemporary issues, and the volume was popular at the time and has proved a basic text since. The commission took a direct role in this series and, by the time the First World War intervened, fifteen volumes had been published by the Archives. Some provided guides to aspects of the Archives' holdings, but most explored particular themes. The constitutional documents were extended to 1818, and the War of 1812,

42 Editorial, *Globe*, Toronto, 13 July 1907.

43 C.W. Colby, "Patriotism and History," *Proceedings of the Canadian Club Toronto for the year 1904-1905* (Toronto, 1905), vol. 2, p. 113. Original emphasis.

44 PAC, Laurier Papers, p. 113791-2, Shortt to Laurier. 17 September 1906.

45 *Ibid.*, p. 112660, Laurier to Doughty, 21 August 1906.

46 PAC, P.C. 788, 17 April 1907.

47 Queen's University Archives, Adam Shortt Papers, Colby to Shortt. 8 September 1907.

48 PAC, P.C. 788, 17 April 1907.

the Northwest, the Red River Settlement, the journals of Francis Larocque (1805), and of Alexander H. Murray (1847-8), were treated individually.

In this favourable environment, the grand project mooted by Doughty in his 1905 report, a new collaborative history of Canada, took form. Though never officially part of the Archives' programme, the twenty-three volume series, *Canada and Its Provinces*, was an integral part of Doughty's overall design. Thinking became planning in 1909, the year after his close friend and colleague, Adam Shortt, moved to Ottawa as Civil Service Commissioner. With the enthusiastic support of a young publisher, Robert Glasgow, and the cooperation of the Historical Manuscripts Commission, they began the laborious process of calling on historians across Canada for detailed monographs on their various fields of expertise. They took as their guide *The Cambridge Modern History*, expecting new archival research and emphasizing objectivity. The interpretative role of the historians was minimized, but Shortt and Doughty were clear on the ultimate purpose of the series. They hoped to provide the cultural parallel to the new railways, canals, telegraphs and other technological enterprises linking the country. They cautioned that the prevailing commercial enthusiasm could obscure the fact that "the national character is not moulded exclusively by economic causes." The premise of *Canada and Its Provinces* as much as for the Archives' programme was set out confidently:

To the end that a broad national spirit should prevail in all parts of the Dominion, it is desirable that a sound knowledge of Canada as a whole, of its history, traditions and standards of life, should be diffused among its citizens, and especially among the immigrants who are peopling the new lands....⁴⁹

The several editions of *Canada and Its Provinces* (1912 to 1917) were successful in both financial and historical terms. Dr. W.A. Mackintosh accurately caught the intentions of the editors when he referred to it as "one of those important works which are not likely to be models for the future but which really create much of the future."⁵⁰

In acquiring material for the Archives' collections, Doughty elaborated upon and indeed went far beyond even the most ambitious dreams of his predecessor. Doughty's contemporaries were unanimous in lauding his abilities as a collector. And in retrospect, stories of his feats, stratagems and ploys cloak his reputation in the panoply of legend. Nor were his interests limited strictly to the archival field. He paid little heed to distinctions amongst archives, libraries, museums and art galleries. By emphasizing the romance of the past and the importance of drawing upon all forms of evidence to stimulate the imagination, Doughty extended the normal interests of archives. Many of his acquisitions now form part of the National Museums, the National Gallery and the National Library.

The dominant aspect of Doughty's acquisition policy and the one on which he lavished most attention was that of collecting material from Britain, France and other European countries. This was the obvious collections policy for a young

49 A. Shortt and A.G. Doughty, eds., *Canada and Its Provinces*, vol. I (Toronto, 1914), "Editors' Introduction," p. vii.

50 W.D. Mackintosh, "Adam Shortt, 1859-1931," *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* (May, 1938): 173-74.

country, a colony searching for its past amongst the papers, both official and private, of its former imperial administrators. And, to recover a large part of the documents needed for Canadian history, Doughty, like Brymner, had little choice but to have documents transcribed by hand, "of necessity a slow and tedious process." Transcripts lacked the intrinsic aura of history and their acquisition excited few beyond the concerned historical specialist, but to repatriate many of the records of Canada's colonial history they were essential. Dr. H.P. Biggar was appointed to direct the Archives' copying programme overseas, and under his careful supervision the programme expanded and accelerated.

Doughty's most prestigious successes came in the parlours and drawing rooms of first the British and then the French aristocracy. He began his campaign with his first trip to England in 1904 carrying letters of introduction from Lord Minto and Lord Strathcona, and seeking either outright donations or at least permission to copy material concerning Canada. He attempted to infuse pride in ancestral contributions to Canada through involving many descendants of the old families in the 1908 Quebec Tercentenary Celebrations. Contacts were maintained and developed in successive trips overseas and through a steady correspondence. The First World War delayed his efforts but, in the post-war atmosphere of respect and gratitude for the Canadian effort, Doughty's campaign emerged with renewed vigour. In 1922-23, Doughty spent a year overseas, systematically contacting the descendants of all former governors and governors-general. These were brought together in Canadian history societies in both England and France with gala banquets in the two capitals in 1923 and 1924. The speeches were long, glowing and sentimental, but the Duke of Devonshire summarized the true intent in a jocular manner:

I can only offer one word of advice to all of you who may have documents and papers of interest to Canada, and that is, the sooner you produce them the better. You will have to do so in due course, and to save both time and temper you had better do it with the greatest possible alacrity.⁵¹

Doughty's personal charm, his sense of humour and his infectious belief in the importance of his task won him respect and cooperation. Gradually, the Durham, Murray, Monckton and Townshend papers, the Northcliffe collection, the Elgin-Grey correspondence and a host of other family papers and artifacts found their way into Doughty's keeping.

Within Canada, Doughty's acquisition programme lacked the vigour and personal involvement that distinguished his efforts overseas. His first reports had suggested the preparation of a comprehensive guide to archival resources across the country. A beginning was made with the surveys in Quebec and Nova Scotia, but the process was soon transformed into a reconnaissance of the material that should be copied or acquired by the Archives. Doughty's instincts were to acquire and centralize rather than simply to locate and describe historical materials. By 1908 Doughty's agents had turned from listing to transcribing and acquiring. During the years prior to the First World War, regional Archives' offices were established in Montreal, Quebec, Trois Rivières, Saint John and Halifax, while Archives' agents

51 A.G. Doughty, *The Canadian Archives and Its Activities* (Ottawa, 1924), p. 37.

travelled in Ontario and to a much more limited extent on the prairies. The role of these agents varied from region to region, with those in Quebec concentrating on copying ecclesiastical, notarial and judicial records and with those elsewhere actively acquiring or simply reporting on discoveries. The dynamic spark of initiative that led Doughty to attempt a more systematic acquisitions programme overseas appears strangely absent in Canada. For the most part, he relied on the uneven interests and initiative of his agents.

Neither Brymner nor Doughty nor the Historical Manuscripts Commission considered the limits on the Archives' acquisition interests. Little distinction had been made between documents of local, provincial or national importance. Brymner, like his successor, decried local attempts to preserve records, viewing this as a hindrance to both their proper preservation and to research.⁵² And where the Archives' agents were most successful in their acquisitive endeavours, the Archives encountered the strength of another view of the Canadian identity: that rooted in regionalism. In the Maritimes, the most active of Doughty's agents, W.C. Milner, quickly roused the Nova Scotia Historical Society and other similar groups to opposition. "Sending documents to Ottawa," Milner concluded, "is to many people like shipping them to a foreign country and most of my effort results not only in criticism but open resistance."⁵³ Historians, professional and amateur, complained bitterly of "the looting and denudation of the Provinces whether for the benefit of Ottawa or of the United States. We need cultural centres in these parts badly."⁵⁴ Gradually, Milner repented of his former zeal in sending parish registers, township records and other local materials to Ottawa. The role of the regional offices in Saint John and Halifax changed in the 1920s to provide more complete archival service, with their own collections and reading rooms. The appropriate roles for federal, provincial and local archives were explored in the Maritimes in the 1920s. Doughty endorsed a proposal to establish federally operated archives to preserve the records of the three provinces.⁵⁵ But when plans were developed to construct the New Brunswick Museum and the Nova Scotia government built an archives building, Doughty closed the two offices and offered his full support to the local initiatives.

The bare statistics of the growth of the Archives under Doughty's direction suggest something of his achievement. From a collection of 3,155 volumes in 1904, the Archives grew to over 500,000 volumes of manuscripts, records and transcripts, 30,000 maps, 20,000 pictures, 40,000 books and 10,000 pamphlets in his three decades. The collection outgrew both the 1906 building and an addition opened in 1926. The Archives itself assumed a museum atmosphere, attracting both official and casual visitors to see Doughty's latest treasures. Travelling exhibits and circulating series of lantern slides took some of the more colourful of the Archives' holdings to a broader public and classrooms. But of more lasting significance, this expanding collection had its impact on Canadian historical scholarship.

Brymner had encouraged those teaching the first university courses in Canadian history. But the formation of the Historical Manuscripts Commission, the

52 PAC, RG 37, Brymner Letterbooks, vol. 2, Brymner to Jonas Howe, 2 March 1885.

53 PAC, RG 37, vol. 18, Milner to Doughty, 2 December 1916.

54 New Brunswick Museum, W.F. Ganong Papers, Webster to Ganong, 30 October 1922.

55 PAC, RG 37, Letterbooks, vol. 15, p. 219, Doughty to Webster, 2 November 1922, and *ibid.*, vol. 18, p. 299, Doughty to Ganong, 29 September 1927.

publication of archival documents and the preparation of *Canada and Its Provinces* signalled a more active role for the Archives in assisting the emerging historical profession. As universities began courses in Canadian history, the Archives responded with "an experiment of historical research scholarships." Senior students, nominated by their universities, were given fifty dollars a month for the three summer months to research an historical topic of their choice under the guidance of the Archives' staff. Eight students began this programme in 1911 but, though it continued until 1920, Doughty expressed disappointment that "there have been few students in the Universities who intended to take up history as a profession."⁵⁶ The Archives quietly lobbied the universities just after the World War to devote more attention to Canadian history. And it was Doughty who penned the warning issued in the House of Commons by Sir Robert Borden that "the American universities are in a position to offer and do offer, a far better course in history than can be offered in Canada. This will in the course of time have a very serious effect on Canadian development...."⁵⁷ The Archives enlisted the support of Queen's University and in 1922 the university established the School of Research in Canadian History, a graduate course held at the Archives every summer, save one, until 1940.

The research atmosphere of the Archives had been bolstered in 1917 with the creation of the Historical Documents Publication Board and the appointment of Dr. Adam Shortt as its full-time chairman. Shortt joined Doughty and the Archives' staff, endowing the Archives with a scholarly yet open mood conducive to research, discussion and intellectual discovery. The number of researchers increased with each passing summer through the 1920s. Historians from universities across Canada came to explore the new materials Doughty was placing at their disposal. This was their meeting place, to research, to exchange ideas, to organize the profession, to plan new publications, to test new hypotheses, and to renew their enthusiasm before returning to their winter vigils teaching Canadian history, often alone, at scattered universities. Reflecting on the role of the archives, Professor Chester Martin wrote:

The periodical gatherings of Canadian scholars at Ottawa have done more perhaps than any other agency to nationalize the historical outlook of Canada, to obliterate provincialisms, and to lay the foundations of Canadian history itself in sound scholarship and research.⁵⁸

Looking up from his desk in the Archives' reading room, Professor A.L. Burt of the University of Alberta remarked on the number of researchers working around him: "It is very interesting to see the actual renaissance of Canadian history in the course of preparation."⁵⁹ Doughty and Shortt were always available for consultation and guidance, presiding over what Burt termed "an inter-university faculty."⁶⁰ An attempt by Doughty to establish a system of research grants in 1920 failed but, with

56 *Ibid.*, vol. 15, p. 23, Doughty to Percy Nobbs, 29 March 1922.

57 Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, 4 May 1921, p. 2946; and see PAC, Sir Robert Borden Papers, MG 26 H, p. 145842, Doughty to Borden, n.d.

58 Chester Martin, "Fifty Years of Canadian History," in the Royal Society of Canada, *Fifty Years in Retrospect 1882-1932* (n.p., n.d.), pp. 66-67.

59 PAC, Dr. A.L. Burt Papers, MG 30, D103, Burt to Mrs. Burt, 13 July 1926.

60 *Ibid.*, 23 July 1926.

liberal policies regarding access and the use of photostat and through a constant correspondence with researchers, the Archives was available to all.

As research advanced and the sense of common purpose amongst the historians matured, they came to recognize some limitation in the Archives' policies. By 1922, the Historical Manuscripts Commission had ceased to meet. In its place, an informal lobby of younger historians emerged, praising Doughty's acquisitive skills and the research environment he had created, but cursing "the utter lack of organizing genius in the Archives."⁶¹ A petition presented to the prime minister in 1929 urged additional funds to extend the Archives' acquisition programme within Canada and to prepare a comprehensive guide to the materials amassed by Doughty.

The historians' petition also drew attention to Doughty's major failure, by proposing that a policy "be devised for the gradual and continuous transfer of the records of government departments to the Archives...."⁶² Despite the promising beginning of 1904, the Dominion Archivist and the Keeper of the Public Records had not become one in Doughty. By temperament as much as by circumstance, he had emphasized the cultural rather than the record-keeping role of archives. With the help of the Historical Manuscripts Commission, the Archives had nearly become a full-fledged public records office. In 1912 the government followed the commission's advice in appointing a Royal Commission with Dr. Doughty and Sir Joseph Pope as its leading members, to examine the state of departmental records. Their report, published in 1914, recommended the establishment of a public records office, similar to a records centre, as part of the Archives. Money was voted, but plans for the necessary addition were postponed with the outbreak of war. During the war, the Archives attempted a full survey of the war records, but a suggestion to construct a records building to house these materials found little support.⁶³ In the early 1920s, Doughty returned to the 1914 report, hoping to have a simple records storage building erected.⁶⁴ But the addition which was made in 1926 to the Archives emphasized museum space and room for researchers, rather than more prosaic records storage. A Public Records Commission was appointed in 1926 to advise the government on all matters relating to the preservation of its records with Doughty as its paid chairman.⁶⁵ This, though, appears to have been less an expression of concern about the state of records than a device to raise Doughty's salary to retain his services. During Doughty's last decade at the Archives, from 1925 to 1935, only the Post Office and the Governor General's office transferred any significant quantity of records to the Archives. While Doughty had been on the verge of fusing the two archival roles in the one institution, an active records programme eluded him. With age, his arguments became more perfunctory and the initiative passed to others.

61 *Ibid.*, 21 June 1927.

62 "Notes and Comments," *Canadian Historical Review* 10 (June 1929): 97.

63 PAC, RG 37, vol. 304, "First Report of the Commission on War Records and Trophies," January 1919.

64 PAC, RG 37, Letterbooks, vol. 14, pp. 407-409, Doughty, "Memorandum made at the request of the Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Borden," 9 June 1921.

65 PAC, P.C. 748, 12 May 1926.

The programmes Doughty had inspired were crippled by the financial stringency of the Depression and by the death of those who worked to implement them. The work of the Historical Documents Publication Board was wound up after Adam Short's death in 1931. Between 1 January 1931 and 31 December 1935, the Archives lost through death or retirement twelve of its members, six of whom were senior personnel. Only one of these archivists was replaced and no new positions were created. Financial difficulties even forced Doughty to discontinue use of the photostat and to revert to manuscript copying for researchers. Regional offices were closed and the Archives gradually lost something of its national presence. Doughty's own thoughts were increasingly of retirement. But only after five years of indecision did he accept partial retirement, becoming Dominion Archivist Emeritus in March 1935. With an office in the Archives and a continuing interest in acquiring historical treasures, Doughty still received a salary as chairman of the figmentary Public Records Commission. A knighthood followed and at his death a year later, Prime Minister Mackenzie King paid him the unique honour by having a statue erected to his memory: "I said I did not know of another man in the Public Service who had made so important a contribution to our public life."⁶⁶

Dr. James F. Kenney, the Archives' Director of Historical Research and Publicity, served as Acting Dominion Archivist from March 1935 to November 1937. The frustrations of declining budgets and a lack of initiative began to show. Kenney's report for 1935 noted the continuing decline in the number of staff and the consequent slowing of the process of arranging and describing new accessions. The Archives' building itself was virtually full, crippling its primary function of routinely preserving departmental records. With his emphasis on public records, Kenney focused on the key problem facing the Archives.

Doughty's many activities and his enthusiasm for the cultural role of the Archives left the impression with many "that Public Records were not the primary concern of the Archives."⁶⁷ In 1933 a proposal originated with the Treasury Board for the construction of an interdepartmental records building to relieve the congestion in office space. This was planned as a low cost storage building on the Experimental Farm with each department retaining control over its own stored records. George Brown, editor of the *Canadian Historical Review*, and other historians urged instead the implementation of the recommendations of the 1914 Royal Commission report on public records by joining the planned records building to the Archives. Kenney did obtain authority in 1936 to prevent certain records from being destroyed, but the storage building opened two years later without archival involvement.⁶⁸ The newly appointed Dominion Archivist, Dr. Gustave Lanctôt, could only conclude: "As a result, the country is now faced with the extremely serious problem of a second archives department deprived of technical direction, thus nullifying the fifty year old policy of centralization and technical control so efficient in the past."⁶⁹

66 PAC, W.L.M. King Papers, MG 26 J13, Diary, 2 December 1936.

67 Canadian Historical Association Archives Committee, "The Discussion of the Problem of Public and Historical Records in Canada," *Canadian Historical Association Annual Report*, (1944), p. 40.

68 PAC, TB 160481, 2 June 1936; see Jay Atherton, "The Origins of the Public Archives Record Centre, 1897-1956," *Archivaria* 8 (Summer 1979): 49-54.

69 PAC, RG 37, vol. 304, "Memorandum and Draft Order in Council Regarding Records," February 1939.

Dr. Lanctôt had joined the Archives' staff in 1912, and held the post of Chief French Archivist from 1922 until his appointment as Dominion Archivist on 26 November 1937. Years of economic depression followed by war gave little scope for new initiative. Indeed, by scholarly temperament and personal interest, Lanctôt seemed content to follow largely in Doughty's footsteps. In acquisitions he shifted the focus to stress post-Confederation Canadian materials rather than the papers of colonial officials. And some of the paintings acquired by Doughty were transferred to the National Gallery. But Lanctôt still delighted in acquiring museum objects and accompanied the 1939 Royal Tour as official historian, acquiring documents, the royal gold-plated telephone and the dress worn by Queen Elizabeth in the Canadian Senate. The London, Paris and Montreal offices of the Archives continued the laborious transcription of documents. But new documentary media entered the Archives in 1937 with the establishment of a section to preserve motion picture film and sound recordings. Much, though, remained to be done in processing the great volume of material acquired but left largely unattended by Doughty.

War brought further budget reductions. Staff left for service overseas. Efforts by Lanctôt to establish a war records survey modelled on that conducted by the Archives in 1917-18 sparked concern about the increasing volume of government records. As the war continued, the Privy Council Office, actively encouraged by historians like George Brown and G.P. de T. Glazebrook, took up the campaign for an active records programme. An informal Public Records Committee was convened by the Secretary of State in June 1944 to consider programme proposals. Within a few months, this became a permanent Committee on Public Records, chaired by the Secretary of State and including the Dominion Archivist, representatives of major departments, two representatives of the Canadian Historical Association, with W.E.D. Halliday from the Privy Council Office as secretary.⁷⁰ In the view of the historians and their allies in the Privy Council Office, the first priority for this new committee was to advise on integrating the functions of a public record office with the Archives.⁷¹ Information was gathered from Washington and London on their records systems. Amendments to the Public Archives Act were drafted. Once again, though, the campaign slowed. Lanctôt, preoccupied with problems of space and budget, and with no experience of a public records programme, could not provide the leadership necessary for such a programme.⁷² As in Doughty's later years, the initiative had passed elsewhere. Indeed, Lanctôt, like Doughty and Brymner before him, was motivated by a different vision of archival service. It is doubtful that any one of them would have subscribed to George Brown's categorical assertion that "Any proper archives or public records policy must be based primarily on the principal[sic] of service to the government and must be acceptable to the departments of government."⁷³ To Lanctôt and his predecessors, the preservation of public records was important, but it was not an end in itself. It was but one means to their broader objective, the cultural objective of disseminating historical information. Whatever their limitations

70 PAC, P.C. 6175, 20 September 1945.

71 PAC, Records of the Public Records Committee, RG 35, 7, vol. 9, W.E.D. Halliday, "Report of the Advisory Committee on Public Records," 16 July 1945.

72 *Ibid.*, vol. 4, Brown to Halliday, 21 January 1947.

73 George W. Brown, "The Problem of Public and Historical Records in Canada," *Canadian Historical Review*, 25 (March 1944): 2.

as administrators, these scholars had indeed made the Archives, as Doughty had promised Laurier, “an important factor in the development of our national life.”

Lanctôt retired, the records problems unresolved, late in 1948. He was succeeded by Dr. W. Kaye Lamb, an experienced librarian and an able historian, who was familiar with archives and versed in administration. Within a few months of his appointment, Dr. Lamb testified before the Massey Commission. Tracing the history of the Archives from its modest beginnings in 1872, Dr. Lamb echoed the sentiments of the historical community in paying high tribute to his predecessors for their services to scholarship. He and indeed all Canadian archivists were heirs of an impressive tradition. But, acknowledging this, he focused his remarks on the one essential aspect of an archival programme which had eluded the Archives: routine archival involvement in the selection and disposition of government records. The Archives had gained wide respect as an active cultural institution, gathering historical materials from many sources and encouraging both academic and popular interest in the past. On analysis, though, the Archives' collections contained few post-Confederation government records and the administrative benefits of efficient records management remained but theory. The Archives had emerged from two nineteenth-century institutional roots, but the spirit of Brymner's Archives Branch, honoured and popular, had predominated. The blending of roles, cultural and administrative within one institution, had not occurred. This remained Dr. Lamb's greatest challenge and his success became his greatest contribution to archival practice.