

a single journal, any article on the topic, especially a lead article, must be considered frivolous in the extreme. To accentuate one's irritation, Dodds' contribution, when it is not self-congratulatory or vindictive, is, one can only assume, simply wrong when he asserts, for example, that comment critical of *Archivaria* has been kept out of the journal by "the eye of the editor." If this was true of the Dodds era I am optimistic enough to believe that it is not true of *Archivaria*'s present policy. I remain confident that the "editorial portcullis" will not be lowered upon this particular piece of unsought criticism.

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Gordon Dodds Replies

Kathleen Garay is perfectly entitled to express her opinion on the merits or otherwise of my article. I do, however, resent most strongly the imputation that it sprang from any wish to aggrandise myself. Even more offensive do I find her assertion that I have been vindictive towards anyone, especially Hugh Taylor whom I have known for twenty-five years. My respect for his archival contribution to Canada is well recorded and my admiration for his fertile mind, with its leaping imagery, is undiminished.

Gordon Dodds
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General Editor Replies

While Dr. Garay's opening words about *Archivaria* 17 are pleasant to read, her subsequent attack on Gordon Dodds' lead article as a "navel-gazing piece of self-congratulation" must be challenged.

Before defending the article's lead position, I want to question several of her assumptions for, if they are correct and the piece was thus indeed only "self-serving" of its author, I would never have published it. Is it true, as Garay asserts, that Dodds' article really "consists of nothing much more than a survey of sixteen issues of a single journal" and that even this slim offering contains a "particular concentration on the role played by one Gordon Dodds in steering the archival flagship"? A breakdown of Dodds' twenty-one pages reveals the following: eight on the early history and evolution of the archival profession and the important role of *The Canadian Archivist*; eight on *Archivaria* (despite having twenty times the material of *The Canadian Archivist*); one on Hugh Taylor's book; almost two on the Wilson Report and the proceedings of the Kingston Congress on Archives; and almost three pages of conclusions dealing with such central concerns as the search for an archival identity, archival education, and the needed development of a corpus of archival theory.

Furthermore, of the less than 40 per cent of the pages devoted to *Archivaria*, the breakdown is as follows: the six issues under Peter Bower and Ed Dahl got three pages; Terry Eastwood's two issues got two pages, as did my first two; and Dodds' six issues (the longest General Editorship to date) got one page, or under 5 per cent of the entire article. This seemed to me at the time, and to the evaluators of the manuscript, to be rather excessive modesty on Dodds' part rather than a "concentration" amounting to self-promotion. From this breakdown, it is clear that Dodds was selectively searching for themes and trends, rather than giving an issue-by-issue narrative of a "single journal."

I ran the article in the lead position because it offers a lively, controversial perspective (if obviously a personal one) on a central concern of our profession. Similar sweeping, personal overviews of the state of professional writing have been run (as lead articles) in *The Canadian Historical Review* at least two or three times in the past decade. Such pieces help to focus a profession's direction, to define its goals and sense of mission. In twenty-five years, from having no collective existence for archivists in Canada in the late 1950s through to *Archivaria* 16, the archival profession has come a long way. By tracing that path, searching for common themes, pointing out pitfalls avoided and pinnacles attained, Dodds assessed our professional psyche with singular clarity. Yet his analysis is no mere Whiggish tale of wondrous progress, under his own or other editors' regimes. His conclusion makes it clear that we have only begun to ask the real questions of archival work and that many false turns and blind alleys have been taken. His bracing prescription that archivists in Canada now stand posed to explore, from their unique perspective, "the history of recorded information, the nature of communication, the structure of societies, the behaviour of man, and so on," and that such scholarly study of the records in our care is "an absolutely essential approach to understanding archives" struck me as a particularly incisive clarion call to archivists and thus worthy of lead article status. That it should come from a co-founder of the ACA, its first President, its longest-term General Editor, and a well-established author and teacher of archives (and history) only underlined its import. That it should follow from an analysis of "the best" we had collectively produced in Canadian archival literature seemed a humbling rather than a self-congratulatory reflection.

Garay's final point is simply wrong, and must be rebutted lest it gain any credence. Dodds nowhere asserts, as Garay claims, "that comment critical of *Archivaria* has been kept out of the journal by 'the eye of the editor.'" The "eye of the editor" phrase referred to not allowing *Archivaria* to become either a how-to magazine for those "who yearn for instruction manuals, fund-raising tips, and preconference workshops" or a newsletter for those who are geared to booming as successes "every plan, every event, and every report of the event" — as Garay will readily find if she reads the paragraph immediately preceding the offending quote and to which it refers. Dodds is saying simply that *Archivaria* must fall into neither trap; it must remain a vehicle for scholarly research and reflection about Canadian archives and the records in their care — the sponsors of the SSHRCC grant for one expect no less, and each General Editor's role, to return to Dodds' point, is to *ensure* no less. As Associate Editor at various times in the 1970s under Bower, Dahl, and Dodds, and as General Editor myself,

I can categorically state that no manuscript has ever been refused because an editor disagreed with its theme or interpretation — what a thin journal we would have had! Manuscripts were rejected only if the research was not complete, the subject was not thoroughly explored or was not explored from an archival perspective, the subject conversely was already well explored elsewhere, or the writing and organizational style were beyond rescue. Editors have often taken promising but unpublishable manuscripts and, working with the authors and archival evaluators right across the country, have had them revised to meet the standards expected of a scholarly journal, standards I am pleased to report more and more archivists are now achieving relatively unaided. But it was not always so, and that cumulative raising of standards is the substance of Dodds' paragraph on editorial discretion which Garay so badly misinterprets. The "editorial portcullis" operates solely on scholarly merit, never personal whim or "in-house" interpretation.

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Archivists Need Visual Aid

I attended and gave a paper to the 1984 Annual Meeting of the Association of Canadian Archivists in Toronto. I would like first of all to compliment the conference coordinators and the Local Arrangements Committee for their exemplary work, both in arranging the agenda and in providing a programme and a theme which was provocative, far-ranging, and most informative. As a non-textual archivist, however, I should be forgiven for asking the question: why don't more speakers at these conferences utilize audio-visual tools or other aids in delivering papers which can be, quite frankly, somewhat lacklustre and boring, especially when delivered in monotonous drones? Several participants criticized the sessions as being too long and difficult to sit through — but is the length of the session really the problem, or is it the presentation? I do not wish to criticize the speakers, however, since all of them had really quite valuable things to say. Instead I would like to urge the use of visuals such as slides, overheads, and video-cassette recordings in such presentations, not only because the subjects of several of the papers dealt with visual material, but also because a picture (put into its proper context, of course!) is worth a thousand words, and God knows, a thousand less words might have sometimes helped. Presentations are enhanced by such aids — teachers have known this for years — why not get archivists to wake up to the possibilities as well?

Lest I sound too petulant in this regard, I must say that I was pleased that the ACA Toronto meetings included no less than four papers dealing with either the visual record, photography, or television, a higher proportion of non-textual presentations than I can ever remember. And why not? We live in an electronic age, and a visual age — not only are we collecting the stuff, but all of the