# "As Accurate as is Humanly Possible": Accessing the Manuscript Industrial Schedules of the 1871 Census of Canada

## by ELIZABETH BLOOMFIELD

Questions about the automation and access of archival records have been debated in this journal and were the focus of a recent conference hosted by the Vancouver Island Project and the University of Victoria.<sup>1</sup> This note reports progress in the first stage of a project to facilitate access to the industrial data of the 1871 manuscript census. During 1985-86 the project has been sheltered by the Department of Geography, University of Guelph and assisted by a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

The manuscript schedules of industrial establishments, recently made available on microfilm as part of the whole 1871 manuscript census by the Public Archives, constitute a uniquely valuable source.<sup>2</sup> Although similar details were collected in the censuses of 1881, 1891, 1901 and 1911, none of the manuscript industrial schedules for those years have survived.

The 1871 census enumerators recorded the following details of industrial activity in 1870 for each enterprise they included:

- Name of proprietor(s),
- Statement of type of establishment/nature of product,
- Values of fixed and floating (working) capital,
- Number of working months in the year,
- Average numbers employed, distinguished into males and females over 16 years, boys and girls under 16 years,
- Motive power other than manual (water, steam, horse) with the nominal force stated in units of horse power,
- Quantities and values of specified raw materials,
- Quantities and values of manufactured products.

The format of an original manuscript schedule is illustrated in Figure 1, for part of the town of Stratford, which we shall use for examples in this note. The facsimile also suggests the problems posed for users by the calligraphy and, sometimes, the spelling of the census enumerators.

Only a very limited amount of this material was published in the official census volumes of the 1870s. The industrial statistics were organized primarily by various types of

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<sup>1</sup> P.A. Baskerville and C.M. Gaffield, Archives, Automation and Access: Proceedings of an Interdisciplinary Conference at the University of Victoria, March 1-2, 1985 (Victoria, 1986).

<sup>2</sup> T.A. Hillman, Catalogue of Census Returns on Microfilm, 1666-1881 (Ottawa, 1981).

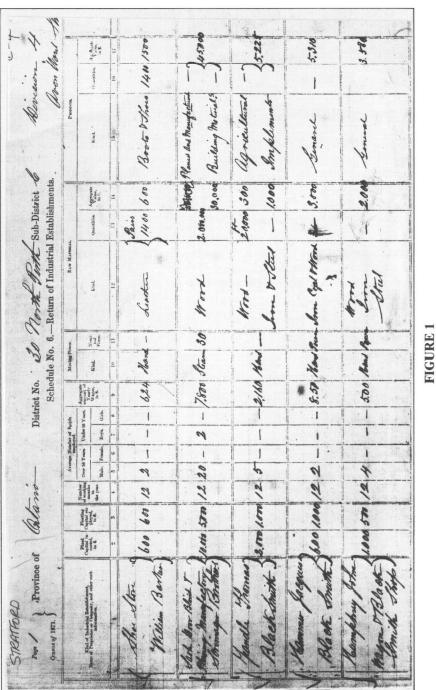


FigURE 1 Facsimile of Census Manuscript Schedule for Part of Stratford industry, which were defined pragmatically rather than systematically. Summary data only were published for each of the 206 census districts (90 in Ontario); and no industrial data at all were published for smaller areal units. Those responsible for the 1871 Census declared that it was "as accurate as is humanly possible" and, as the first nationwide count, it did improve on the quality of the 1861 censuses, such as that of New Brunswick.<sup>3</sup> Our project permits some testing of the accuracy and consistency of the material published on industrial activity in 1870, in relation to the details of the manuscript schedules.

Since the 1871 manuscript schedules were first released in the early 1970s, several scholars have examined them to support studies of particular cities, districts, or industrial types. Gregory Kealey, for example, used the Toronto data to provide a context for his study of industrial workers.<sup>4</sup> The York Social History project, directed by Michael Katz, coded data for industrial establishments in Hamilton, as part of its analysis of industrial capitalism in that city.<sup>5</sup> L.D. McCann has used the industrial schedules for Halifax-Dartmouth and for Pictou County, together with Dun credit ratings.<sup>6</sup> Eve Martel reconstituted the general patterns of industry in Montreal, and Joanne Burgess, the organization of the shoe-making industry there.<sup>7</sup> Paul Craven and Tom Traves have drawn on census manuscript data for evidence of industrial activity in railway workshops and yards;<sup>8</sup> Jim Burant has featured the photographic studios of Saint John;<sup>9</sup> and Ian McKay the confectionery and baking industry of Halifax.<sup>10</sup>

However, these uses of the 1870 data have been specific to each researcher's limited purpose. Different systems of classification have been employed, so that comparisons with other places or industrial sectors or with later periods are almost impossible. Very few of these users have transformed the data into machine-readable form, and those who have done so have been unconcerned about making their records accessible to other researchers. Scholars interested only in one category or sector of industrial activity may be daunted by the time-consuming labour of searching through the microfilmed schedules for a handful of establishments, and could easily miss some which were slightly misplaced in storage or the microfilming process.

The project reported here is making the unpublished data for industrial establishments accessible, in systematic, standardized and machine-readable format, to serve the research interests of economic, business, urban and social historians, historical geographers, industrial archaeologists, and historians of material culture and technology. By coding individual establishments within the framework of census districts, sub-districts and

<sup>3</sup> A.A. Brookes, "Doing the Best I Can: The Taking of the 1861 New Brunswick Census," *Histoire sociale* 9 (1976), pp. 73-77.

<sup>4</sup> G.S. Kealey, Toronto Workers Respond to Industrial Capitalism (Toronto, 1980).

<sup>5</sup> M.B. Katz, M.J. Doucet, and M.J. Stern, *The Social Organization of Early Industrial Capitalism* (Cambridge, 1982).

<sup>6</sup> L.D. McCann, "The Mercantile-Industrial Transition in the Metals Towns of Pictou County, 1857-1931," Acadiensis 10, no. 2 (1981), pp. 29-64.

<sup>7</sup> E. Martel, "L'industrie à Montréal en 1871" (M.A. Thesis, Université du Québec à Montréal, 1978); J. Burgess, "L'industrie de la chaussure," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française* 31 (1977), pp. 187-210.

<sup>8</sup> P. Craven and T. Traves, "Canadian Railways as Manufacturers, 1850-1880," Canadian Historical Association, Historical Papers (1983), pp. 254-81.

<sup>9</sup> J. Burant, "A Written Portrait: Saint John Photographers and Their Studios in the 1871 Census," Archivaria 17 (Winter 1983-84), pp. 275-77.

<sup>10</sup> I. McKay, "Capital and Labour in the Halifax Baking and Confectionery Industry During the Last Half of the Nineteenth Century," *Labour/Le Travailleur* 3 (1978), pp. 63-108.

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enumerators' divisions, by classifying each according to the Standard Industrial Classification, and by the use of computer methods, we can achieve accuracy, consistency, comparability, retrievability, and aggregation.

In the first major phase of the work, the manuscript details for 6,825 industrial establishments in 146 urban or proto-urban centres have been made machine-readable. These establishments constitute 44 per cent of all reported for Ontario in 1871, but 61 per cent of Ontario's total industrial employment and 64 per cent of total provincial production. They also represent 20 per cent of all industrial establishments reported for the four Canadian provinces included in the 1871 census, but 28 per cent of total industrial employment and 33 per cent of total industrial production.

Intensive procedures were developed for verifying basic data, and for editing the databank so that it would be suitable for indexing, search and retrieval, for statistical analysis, for online transmission or copying on diskette to other users, and for printing in hard copy. Particular attention was paid to the accuracy and consistency of the Standard Industrial Classification designations and to verifying the numeric data. Proprietors' names and types of establishments or products were also checked against lists in the R.G. Dun reference books, city and county directories, and county atlases. Where the census enumerator's spelling of a proprietor's name differed significantly from that in a contemporary printed source, while clearly referring to what was the same establishment, the record was "corrected" if this would result in a more conventional and plausible rendering of the name.

The project procedures now enable data for any establishment to be retrieved easily; details for groups of establishments may also be aggregated by geographical unit or industrial type. Both potentialities, illustrated in Tables 1 to 3, are likely to interest scholars in a variety of disciplines.

Table 1 presents the larger industrial establishments of Stratford, to match the material shown in the facsimile schedule above. It also illustrates the range of data available in our databank for each establishment: FIXCAPITAL, FLOCAPITAL, WAGES, RAWMAT and PRODUCTS are the dollar values for fixed capital, floating/working capital, cost of wages, cost of raw materials and value of production, respectively. FORCE refers to the horse power units of non-manual energy, while EMPMEN, EMPWOM, EMPBOY and EMPGIRL specify the numbers of workers by gender and age group. The variable SIC is the Standard Industrial Classification code we have assigned to each enterprise, so that records may be sorted and aggregated by precise industrial types. The Stratford establishments in Table 1 are listed in order of value of production, but they could be as readily retrieved in alphabetical order of the proprietor's name, by size of workforce (TOTEMP), by SIC CODE or by any of the other variables, or indeed in the original order of the manuscript schedules.

The entire databank can also be sorted *en bloc*, without regard to town location, by any of the variables. Thus we can rank all the urban industrial establishments in Ontario by size of workforce, by value of output, or by size of energy source. We can also group establishments by precise industrial type, as we have done for planning mills in Table 2. The Scrimgeour Brothers' planning mill of Stratford, listed in the facsimile schedule (Figure 1) is found to be among the largest, by value of output, in all Ontario urban centres.

Because individual establishments are precisely coded for geographic location and industrial classification, it is possible to aggregate their numeric data into successively larger groupings or areas, including whole towns. Table 3 illustrates this capability, with a summary of the industrial data for the top forty-six urban centres in Ontario, ranked by value of industrial output in 1870. Also illustrated in this table is the possibility of calculating various indices and ratios from the basic data. In addition to AVWAGE (the average wage per industrial worker) and PERCENT (the percentage of a town's total population employed in industrial establishments), other indices could include the average number of workers per establishment and various measures of productivity. It may be noted that Stratford, which ranked nineteenth in value of industrial production in 1870, was less industrialized than other Ontario centres; its AVWAGE and PERCENT values were below the means for Ontario towns and cities with at least 100 industrial workers.

In the next phase of the research project, we are taking two directions. One is to study the feasibility of extending the databank to include rural Ontario as well as the other three provinces enumerated in 1871 — Quebec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia. The other is to apply statistical analysis techniques to the records already in this and other databanks, in order to explore major questions in the history of Canadian social and economic development. One is the organization of industrial capitalism in a period of transition from artisanal craftshops to factories using machinery and integrated work processes. Was Ontario industry characterized by the "concurrent phases of capitalist growth," the variable paths of development of different industrial sectors found by Laurie and Schmitz of the Philadelphia Social History Project?<sup>11</sup> Were the new, large factories more or less productive than the manufactories and craftshops? What can we learn about seasonality and wage-rates in the various types of enterprises, and of the participation of women and children in the industrial workforce? We are also interested in the relationship between industrial growth and structure on the one hand and patterns of general urban development.<sup>12</sup>

A research report is available, describing objectives and procedures, and outlining the databank's potential. It contains five maps or diagrams and twenty tables.

Elizabeth Bloomfield, Gerald Bloomfield, Janine Grant, with Peter McCaskell, Industry in Ontario Urban Centres, 1870: Accessing the Manuscript Census (1986).

It may be ordered from Publications, Department of Geography, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario, Canada, N1G 2W1, for \$7.00 (including postage and handling).

<sup>11</sup> B. Laurie and M. Schmitz, "Manufacture and Productivity: The Making of an Industrial Base, Philadelphia, 1850-1880," in T. Hershberg, ed., *Philadelphia: Work, Space, Family and Group Experience in the 19th Century* (New York, 1981).

<sup>12</sup> E. Bloomfield, Urban-Industrial Growth Processes in Southern Ontario, 1870-1930 (Winnipeg, 1986).

TABLE 1 Larger Industrial Establishments in Stratford, 1870 (value of production at least \$5,000)

PRODUCTS TOUNNAME 14744 60000 49400 30000 30000 15000 163625 RAUMAT 26910) UAGES 412 TOTEMP E 23 45 51 6 51 9 12 15 멾 EMPGIRL 8 EMPMEN EMPLON EMPBOY 8 282 2 25222 000002 FORCE FIXCAPITAL FLOCAPITAL 2500 1000 4000 4000 1600 1600 1000 500 43400 Ť 9 19 17 1 22 23 31 1 19 17 1 23 23 31 1 STEAM STEAM STEAH POUER STEAM STEAM STEAN STEAN STEAM STEAN STEAM STEAM S/M 261 107/108-C 101 105 249-M/242 242/249-M 251/254 SLC CODE 311/294 189-F 172 172 174 174 178 259-C 311-C 396 172 379-C 22**7** MOROCCO/KID LEATHER FLAX SCUTCHING MILL YPE ESTABLISHMENT SAU MILL DRESSES/MILL INERY CABINETS TINSMITH BAKER/CONFECTIONER AGRC IMPLEMENTS WHPLEATHER HEY CARPENIRY TILYSTOVE SHOP 2004/CANDLES CABINETS GRAIN MILL TALLOR TALLOR TALLOR TALLOR S PATENT HEDICINES S PATENT HEDICINES FLOUR MILL MILLINERY/TAILOR AGRC IMPL/FOUNDRY PLANING/SASH/DOOR AILOR/MILLINERY SAU/PLANING MILL WOOLLEN MILLS BOOTS & SHOES CONFECTIONERY BOOTS & SHOES TEAT PACKING BLACKSMITH BLACKSM1TH **UATCHMAKER** CABINETS CARRIAGES CARPENTER **FINSMITH** TANNERY BAKERY TAILOR COOPER M JHES GRAIN S JHES GRAIN ER EE EGROEE STA RET TE SOUGE STA RET TE SOUGE STA EGGS ISAAC SOUG PA SOUGH JHES T HEAVOY 8 DONE HITTARE SHALEL iource: URBIND71 databank. ARGO ADAH L UILLIAMSON/FOSTER/CO ALEXANDER EASSON UITLIAM MARSHALL & FULLER YORNE & CLARK SHARMAN JOSEPH SUGDEN & SONS MEYERS ROBERT BENJAMIN UTLL IAM RODERICK DAVID JACOUES G000U1N JOHN F ABRAHAM J J THOMAS JOSEPH ROBERT BAIRD & BIRCH HENRY THOS SCRIMGEOUR BROS с ш \*\* Total \*\*\* ROPR LET OR **UHITEHEAD** MCDONALD OSBERT ADAMS & CAMPBELL SCHOL 72 RIGGS JOHNSON REDFORD APAMS ELDER COREY RIGGS YEANDLE LAUSON ONELTL 51850N HAMMER GIBSON YNN & HITH **CLARK** NICOL DALY Ē

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TABLE 2	Planing Mills in Ontario Urban Centres, 1870, Listed by Value of Output	(all with output of at least \$10,000)
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PRODUCTS TOUNNAME		60000 INGERSOLL	60000 TORONTO		58000 BLENHEIM	51250 TORONTO	50000 TORONTO	45000 STRATFORD	40000 FONDON	39062 TORONTO	35000 GUELPH	32000 LONDON	30000 INGERSOLL	30000 PETERBOROUGH	28000 HAMILTON	25000 STRATHROY	24600 TILSONBURG	20000 BRANTFORD	20000 OTTAUA	18000 GUELPH	18000 ST CATHARINES	15000 HAMILTON	15000 OSHAWA	1441D PARIS	1395D HAMILTON	12500 SEAFORTH	12000 KINCARDINE	12000 LONDON	12000 PARIS	12000 WHITBY	11400 [ROQUOIS	10275 WOODSTOCK	10000 BELLEVILLE	10000 BRANTFORD	10000 NAPANEE	10000 PORT HOPE	10000 STRATHROY	L770+0+	7 44 L TUL
RAUMAT	2000	30000	40000	20000	50000	15000	36000	30000£	10000	2250	10000	0009	0009	20500	18000	16000	14000	0096	10000	4 000	10000	5000	8500	5000	4100	4800	0006	4000	10000	2000	4825	3745	2000	1300	1500	2400	0009	101070	N7CT05
NAGES	32000	18000	18110	4800	1100	26000	1000	7800	15500	21000	6500	12000	13000	2568	7800	2000	3600	5000	2000	5770	4000	5000	4000	0009	7800	4000	2000	6500	4500	4000	4400	5500	4000	3000	4500	3500	4000	07606	047117
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PMEN EM	02	40	5	=	16	99	B	20	45	40	20	31	77	9	18	18	=	20	20	12	8	1	-0	14	20	₽	ഹ	14	15	9	17	ដ	12	9	<b>0</b> -	12	10	200	
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XCAPITAL FL	35000	15000	10000	5000	0007	10000	3000	10000	10000	8000	12000	15000	20002	4000	3000	8000	0002	10000	20000	4000	0002	2000	2000	0009	•	2009	3600	1600	4000	3500	8000	3500	1600	2800	4000	5000	1000	UU / 760	nn9\$/7
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POWER	STEAM	STEAM	STEAM	STEAM	STEAN	STEAM	STEAM	STEAM	STEAN	STEAM	STEAM	STEAN	STEAN	STEAM	STEAM	STEAN	UATER	STEAM	UATER	STEAM	STEAM	STEAM	STEAM	UATER	STEAM	STEAM	STEAM		UATER	STEAM	STEAN	STEAM		STEAM	WATER	STEAM			ipt census
SIC CODE	254	254	254	• •		254	254	254	254	254	254	254	254	254	254	254/251	254	254	254	254	254	254	254	254	254	254	254	254	254	254	254/251-5	254	254	254	254	254/311	254		871 manuscr
TYPE ESTABLISHMENT	SASH/BL INDS	SASH/000R5	SASH/BLIND FCY	SASH/BLIND FCY	PLANING/SASHES/DOORS	SASH/BLIND FCY	PLANING/SASH/BLINDS	PLANING/SASH/DOOR	SASH/DOOR FCY	SASH/DOOR FCY	SASH/DOOR FCY	SASH/DOOR FCY	SASH/DOORS	SASH/DOOR/BLIND FCY	SASH/DOOR FACTORY	PLAN ING/SAU MILL	DOOR FACTORY	PLANING	SASH FACTORY	SASH, DOOR	PLANING/SASH/BLINDS	PLANING MILL	PLANING/SASH/DOORS	SASH, DOOR, BLIND FCY	PLANING MILL	PLANING MILL	PLANING FACTORY			SASH/DOOR FCY	PLANING/SHINGLE MILL	SASH/DOOR/BLIND FCY	SASH/BLIND FCY	SASH/DOOR FCY	SASH/DOOR FCY	SASH/BL IND/FANNING M	SASH/DOOR/PLANING		bob Source: URBIND71 databank, compiled from 1871 manuscript census schedules
PROPRIETOR	CURRIER T M & CO	CHRISTOPHER BROS		ഗ		BURKE WILLIAM	PLENDERLEITH JOHN	SCRIMGEOUR BROS	URIGHT & DURAND		STEWART ROBT	GREEN THOMAS		ROBERTSON WILLIAM	BRENNAN MICHAEL	FAUCITT BROS	TILLSON EDUIN A		MCLAREN J & CO	BOULT STEPHEN	HELLEMS & JACKSON		SYKES JOHN	LYON JOHN	BACHELDOR GEORGE	BROADFOOT & GRAY	EVANS & MCKENAGHER	-	TURNBULL DAVID & CO			0	DAVIS & MCRAE	PICKERING JOSEPH	SMITH MATHIAS	U0005 GA&CD	0'BYRNE BERNARD	444  D10  444	Source: URBIND71 date

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TOUN NAME	POP	ESTAB	CAPITAL	EMPLOY	WAGES	RAWMAT	PRODUCTS	PERCENT	AVWAGE	FORCE
TORONTO	56092	542	4428650	9653	2696531	7098197	14544699	17.2	279.35	2147
HAMILTON	26716	326	1578164	4785	1375611	2900141	5634044	17.9	287.48	1236
OTTAWA	21745	233	1095420	3210	880057	2565976	4176610	14.7	274.16	2199
LONDON	15826	216	1026834	2295	699287	1999254	3551520	14.5	304.70	535
ST CATHARINES	7864	158	506352	1416	425052	1731661	2584700	18.0	300.18	750
GUELPH	6878	109	486715	1131	376487	1057379	1901500	16.4	332.88	608
BRANTFORD	8107	98	794295	1258	424602	916309	1835577	15.5	337.52	442
KINGSTON	12407	158	534155	1317	347209	721795	1362756	10.6	263.64	201
GALT	3827	74	395726	796	226843	663293	1217110	20.8	285,00	561
OSHAWA	3185	41	379450	732	259350	612776	1095780	23.0	354.30	274
CHATHAM	5873	95	268540	716	234481	465325	916980	12.2	327.49	492
GODERICH	3954	65	196560	388	101823	638326	892230	9.8	262.43	561
DUNDAS	3135	64	495430	682	182575	461824	882477	21.7	267,70	673
PORT HOPE	5114	77	263450	560	155273	530183	875000	10.9	277.27	348
INGERSOLL	4022	69	314090	627	194917	523194	856212	15.6	310.87	430
PARIS	2640	45	186120	410	108120	547082	844367	15.5	263.71	282
BELLEVILLE	7305	102	285970	914	213748	325998	810465	12.5	233.86	641
PETERBOROUGH	4611	96	311595	759	214282	397949	775095	16.5	282.32	396
STRATFORD	4313	82	193650	538	128482	409107	720206	12.5	238.81	241
HAWKESBURY	1671	39	145150	301	53590	487224	673405	18.0	178.04	317
LINDSAY	4049	75	237400	446	124797	375663	659391	11.0	279.81	676
ALMONTE	2080	46	326051	553	125708	438423	645050	26.6	227.32	530
COBOURG	4442	87	285550	501	131545	411149	642217	11.3	262.56	266
BROCKVILLE	5102	110	185089	706	192122	290206	628315	13.6	272.13	196
WATERLOO	1594	52	118735	218	60312	412627	616835	13.7	276.66	186
GANANOQUE	2020	49	200900	419	113760	280135	604170	20.7	271.50	759
MERRITTON*	1000	10	373500	429	96136	264060	596917	42.9	224.09	690
BOWMANVILLE	3034	60	133370	417	118170	342744	560305	13.7	283.38	216
NAPANEE	2967	62	127415	383	85936	307714	514200	12.9	224.38	504
FERGUS	1666	42	151210	281	85128	309960	511402	16.9	302.95	492
WOODSTOCK	3982	72	166595	453	114200	312357	510065	11.4	252.10	335
STRATHROY	3232	62	154150	437	111120	266820	504400	13.5	254.28	291
PETROLIA	2651	48	98750	187	76376	297156	486342	7.1	408.43	188
ELORA	1498	40	119230	167	41760	354010	479358	10.8	257.78	240
PRESCOTT	2617	39	140200	303	100888	170373	479184	11.6	332.96	225
SMITHS FALLS	1150	43	135425	328	93241	238186	463668	28.5	284.27	451
ST MARYS	3120	71	122220	396	91359	270100	457126	12.7	230.70	289
COLLINGWOOD	2829	49	192000	327	78796	235537	434553	11.6	240.97	435
HESPELER	797	22	145655	266	62025	255557	431303	33.4	233.18	416
PRESTON	1408	52	150396	245	52080	242480	404388	17.4	233.10	153
GEORGETOWN	1282	35	107150	283	64818	256300	386318	22.1	229.04	321
NEWMARKET	1760	35 40	79200	203 189	57084	261354	375570	10.7	302.03	202
		4U 39			57004 49973	-		10.7	302.03	310
THOROLD	1635	37 55	61000	165 222		281651	372006			158
SARNIA	2929		108185		59146	140890	371153	7.6	266.42	
MITCHELL	1802	38	96210	279	75946	207129	366565	15.5	272.21	187
CARLETON PLACE	1205	31	104350	333	76756	212975	357801	27.6	230.50	357
*** Total ***	267136	4019	18006252	41416	11637502	32497604	59009335			22407

# TABLE 3 Ontario Urban Centres in 1870, Ranked by Value of Output: The Top 46 Centres

Source: URBIND71 databank, compiled from 1871 manuscript census schedules.