Redescription Reconsidered: Current Issues in Description and Their Applications for Labour Archives

by **JOAN RABINS**

The advent of automated description with its alluring possibilities and with its inherent constraints is compelling archivists today to make virtually irreversible decisions. Much seems already resolved by default rather than by reasoned choice. Our options have already narrowed. Library cataloguing has become standard for use in archives networks despite recognition that it lacks the desirable precision to adequately describe unique holdings.

Labour archives were confronted by new descriptive demands before computers forced the archives field as a whole to reconsider its descriptive practices. This experience may provide some perspectives which might be useful in the present context.

In 1983, I wrote an article which examined the need for redescription of archival collections, specifically those of labour records.[1] This was the product of a two-year NEH-funded study which I had undertaken at the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University, which sought the most effective means of coping with the problem of shifting researcher interests as increasing numbers of the "New Labor Historians" began using the collections.

Researchers influenced by the "New Social History" or interested in investigating topics which had only recently come to the fore, such as women's and black history or social protest, also contributed to this perceptible redirection of interest.[2] Finding aids which had been written during the preceding twenty-five years did not necessarily indicate the presence of material of decided interest to these researchers.

This new wave of scholarship and its attendant plethora of new research subjects compelled a critical reevaluation of existing finding aids. Archivists at Wayne State familiar with the collections knew of the existence of documentation which could be used by these researchers, but the guides themselves gave no indication of its whereabouts.

The study concluded that redescription is frequently necessary because description, no matter how carefully done, can become dated as research trends alter. The most effective methodology for redescribing a collection was found to be indexing.

Supplementing a finding aid with an index, providing a fuller description than could be afforded by the traditional folder inventory, seemed to provide the best hedge against obsolescence. Furthermore, in the hope of extending the utility of new finding aids, it became Archives policy at Wayne State to provide an index in the finding aids of all new collections as they were processed.

Perhaps the most important result of the study was the new understanding we gained of description. Description could no longer be regarded as a finite act. Clearly it had to become a dynamic process. An accepted definition of description is "the process of establishing administrative and intellectual control over holdings through the preparation of finding aids."[3] Building on this basis, redescription can be defined as the process of enhancing existing description in order to provide the maximum continuing administrative and intellectual control over holdings. The basic concept that must be accepted is that description is probably never final, and that periodic redescription must be undertaken if intellectual control is to be maintained over a collection.

Although labour archives were among the earliest to feel the impact of the new social history, many other archival institutions now have to confront the same alteration in researcher orientation. The new historians are militant in their rejection of the old narrative history with its emphasis on political and economic factors, prominent leaders, and large institutions. Jacques LeGoff, a director of studies at France's *École pratique des hautes études*, has issued a declaration that the old history is "a corpse that has to be made to lie down."[4] The new history attempts to treat the structure and the process of societal change, seeks to employ quantitative data, stresses the role of the average person, and focuses primarily on group experience.[5]

The new historians are not at all inclined to glorify "great men." For example, the new labour historians are sharply critical of the actions and policies of leaders of the labour movement. Former heroes such as Samuel Gompers have been toppled from their pedestals, and groups such as the Industrial Workers of the World, dismissed by earlier scholars as a curious anomaly, are now the subject of intense study.[6]

Hard on the heels of this new wave of researchers has come the computer. Automation and the possibilities it affords makes this a very challenging time for those of us interested in archival description. At the time of the NEH study, all our descriptive work was done by traditional methods on paper.[7] Now, in a significant number of institutions, finding aids are created on computers using word processing programs and indexing is done with the aid of databases. Tasks which were considered prohibitively expensive because of the time required are now done easily. For instance, amending a finding aid or adding an index is no longer a formidable task.[8]

The possibilities for description have also been completely transformed with the adoption of the MARC AMC format and with the creation of networks, such as the Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN) and the Online Computer Library Center, Inc. (OCLC) in the United States and the University of Toronto Library Automation Systems (UTLAS) in Canada, which permit the sharing of bibliographic information on holdings.[9] Moreover, both commercial software and soft-

ware specifically designed for internal holdings control are being integrated into archives procedures.[10]

Automation brings with it a compelling need for redescription at the same time that it makes it considerably easier and more cost effective to do than it was five years ago. Archives are confronting the prospect of a massive redescriptive effort in order to reap the benefits of computerization both to establish internal holdings control and to participate in available networks.

The term "retrospective conversion" for the process of computerizing paper records has been borrowed from library parlance. However, much as those doing this work would like to simply enter information directly from their finding aids, they are discovering that it is very often necessary to first "redescribe" the collection because the finding aid is inadequate for the purpose or is inconsistent in the use of terminology.[11]

Preparation for automation has caused archivists and others who oversee our documentary heritage to confront the need for descriptive uniformity. Many institutions are already adopting library conventions, such as Library of Congress Subject Headings, the Library of Congress Name Authority File, and Anglo-American Cataloging Rules, to permit participation in bibliographic networks.[12] However, Avra Michelson, who surveyed forty repositories inputting into RLIN, found significant inconsistency in both *what* was described and *how* it was described.[13]

There would seem to be a growing consensus within the archives field that established library cataloguing systems, possibly with some modifications, should be adopted for description of archival holdings even though they were specifically created to satisfy library needs rather than archival needs. The same books may be found in many libraries, whereas archives holdings are largely unique. Books generally have a main topic and can be categorized by one to three descriptors. Archival collections typically document many topics, and in order to select just a few descriptors, archivists must resort to terms of almost meaningless breadth. The volume and diversity contained within archival collections creates a very different need. A limited number of library descriptors may serve for bibliographic descriptive purposes but are not adequate for user-oriented subject access.[14]

What confronts the archivist is a truly ironic dilemma. The price of employing automation as a powerful new descriptive tool may be the necessity of lowering descriptive precision. A greater volume of information about archival holdings may become readily available through bibliographic networks, but will it be of a similar quality to the information which was previously provided by traditional guides?

The use of LC subject headings with the MARC format has been compared to "a modern jet plane powered by a late nineteenth-century model of a steam engine; the thing might possibly move or even fly, but it will soon be prone to accidents, unreliable, and above all, the streamlined features of the fuselage will be wasted because of the slow speed attained."[15]

Another problem which ought to be confronted before opting uncritically for library subject indexing is the low level of success which has been established in quantitative studies of subject catalogue use.[16] One reason underlying this ineffectiveness is that the LC subject terms coined by librarians are very often not the

terms which subject specialists such as historians would employ. For instance, to locate information on what a labour historian would probably term "runaway shops," one must look under "plants, location of." Historians, having been trained to discern subtle distinctions, view with disdain terms which obliterate such nuances. Another problem in applying library nomenclature to archives is the lack of historical context. A term might have a very definite meaning during one period of time, but mean something different during a different era. Similarly, a term accepted during one period might be supplanted later by another.

Some have suggested that this can be resolved by combining LC subject cataloging with subject headings drawn from an internal thesaurus.[17] This option would mean that each repository would have to compile its own list of acceptable subject terms with which researchers and archivists are comfortable. Acceptable terms, of course, would have to be coordinated with archives holding related material. Naturally, the highest attainable level of uniformity would be desirable.

The alternative to the adoption of established library cataloguing methods would have been for the profession to develop archival descriptive standards and subject and name authority lists which would be acceptable to all archives and which would accommodate the uniqueness of their holdings. The likelihood of this effort being undertaken seems negligible at this point now that LC cataloguing has become the norm.

Any list of standard descriptors would necessarily have to be enormous, yet each repository might only utilize a small portion of it. In addition to agreement on terms, there has to be unanimity on rules for use in order to get the precision needed to provide reliable access.[18] An extensive syndetic structure would have to be incorporated and authority control files created to assure that the same name forms were used by all. Past efforts at thesaurus construction have proven to be slow and prohibitively expensive, and many initiatives have ultimately been abandoned when it became clear that to accommodate the needs of all repositories resulted in a thesaurus of unmanageable size.[19]

David A. Bearman and Richard H. Lytle feel that direct subject access to the intellectual content of collections may be the wrong approach.[20] Building on the earlier study done by Lytle[21] they suggest that, rather than emphasizing subject indexing, archives should concentrate on the use of provenance information to provide retrieval access points. They are convinced that form and function of the material must play the overriding part in retrieval. They argue that this approach would permit reference archivists to employ what they term "inference" to "retrieve with greater precision and recall than they can using currently existing approaches."[22]

Provenance and content indexing, of course, do not have to be considered as alternative methods of retrieval.[23] It would seem reasonable to use them in conjunction. Thus, the researcher is afforded not only the traditional provenance information provided by the finding aid with its hierarchical arrangement reflecting the organizational structure of the creating organization, but has as well the added resource of the subject index to verify assumptions as to whether material regarding a specific topic might be contained in a particular file. The index also alerts the user to fugitive items present in unlikely locations. By a coordinated search using both information on provenance and the index, it is often clear that particular subject

citations need not be followed up, since the provenance information clearly indicates that they are unrelated to the specific matter being researched. The assistance which can be provided by a knowledgeable archivist is, of course, not to be underestimated.

Thanks to indexing, researchers at the Wayne State Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs have avoided the task of poring through large quantities of material, and have been very appreciative of the time they have saved. Moreover, they appreciate being directed to specific pockets of documentation they might otherwise have overlooked. More recognition has been given recently to the need to reduce searching time for researchers by "increased effort at the input stage."[24] Indexing should no longer be seen as a luxury or a suspect practice too akin to book usage but as an "integral part of a descriptive program."[25]

In this manner, the accrued knowledge of the processing archivist is recorded and made available to the researcher. When only provenance is indicated, much of the richness of the research done by the processing archivist is not conveyed in a useful manner and is effectively lost unless the researcher is able to establish personal contact with the processor.

Automatic indexing using the KWIC method has been suggested as an alternative to compiling indexes manually.[26] Advocates of this method do not indicate how the appropriate key words would be incorporated into all folder headings in order to be indexed. For instance, a file of letters containing important information on a number of significant individuals and on the Civil Rights Movement might be appropriately labeled "Correspondence, 1968." It is not clear just how all the desirable data points could be included effectively into an acceptable heading.[27]

Automated subject access to individual collections, though an important goal, must be preceded by control of holdings on the physical level. The first objective must be the establishment of nationwide networks, or even a North American network, providing information on the location of archival collections and a broad indication of content.

Archives which have entered information about their holdings into the available networks report that they are not yet finding that many researchers are coming to them as the result of network searches. However, it seems a safe prediction that the growing body of networked information will ultimately become an important supplementary tool for locating archival material, and in time it may replace existing union guides as the main source for this information.

At the repository level, holdings information can be maintained in a more detailed and specific manner. Archival description can occur at a number of levels, such as collection, series, file, or even item. The lower the level indexed, the more specific the term employed. The level to which holdings can be described is generally governed by the resources of the institution.

One of the major criteria for judging the success of automation is the extent to which it results in increased access. For the first time, it could be possible for researchers to feel reasonably confident that they have located nearly all of the important archival sources for their particular study without consulting numerous

guides and special lists. However, it is not certain that this will soon become the case. If only a limited number of main subjects can be used to characterize a collection whatever its size, or if the descriptive system is not attuned to researchers' needs, obviously the access will not be as effective as it is with present-day finding aids.

The skills which archivists have acquired through study of history and practice of their profession may not prove to be totally compatible with the demands of the automated environment. Archivists see themselves as scholars. They relish the experience of being the first person after the creator to explore an archival collection and mark out a path for the historians who are to follow. The great majority have entered the field because of a strong interest in history and a dedication to the preservation of the documentary heritage.

Most archivists today appreciate the potential of computers, from word processing to data management. However, it remains to be seen how well they will cope with the inexorable consistency required for computerized access.[28] They will have to relinquish the authority they exercised in the past in selecting the vocabulary they deemed the most appropriate to describe collections.[29] Instead, they will be obliged to search out the best match from an established thesaurus much as library cataloguers do.[30] And though this work might seem mechanical, it would also seem that it should not be entrusted to those unschooled in the historical context or in the needs of the researchers.

The impediment to redescription of collections to prepare them for retrospective conversion and to better serve new research interests is the absence of descriptive standards. It would be unrealistic to commit limited available resources to any redescriptive effort at this point if, down the line, new standards were to be drawn up which would require all the work to be redone.

Labour collections present special descriptive problems. They tend to incorporate bodies of voluminous data such as grievance records and local workers' union records which are uneconomical to describe in a detailed manner.[31] However, these files contain, in many cases, the very sort of information sought by the new labour historian, either for quantitative studies or to get the feeling of the shop floor. Labour archivists will have to work out descriptive practices which will allow them adequately to describe collections in their repositories so as to serve the needs of labour historians and unions without using terminology so specialized that it is not accessible to researchers from other fields.

Revelation of the fullest research potential of a collection has to be the objective of description, and material should be described even when it is not of great interest to contemporary researchers. For instance, improvements in living conditions resulting from collective bargaining should not be neglected, while strikes and other expressions of worker militancy are overly highlighted.

There is also the need to collect and describe material from unions not currently the object of much research interest, and from non-traditional unions which have entered the labour movement in recent years: those that have been organizing professionals, white-collar workers, or those that represent dissidents who have broken away from their union leadership. These groups are often scorned by blue-

collar unionists, but their story is part of the story of organized labour and needs to be preserved.

The labour archivist must also cope with the problem of tensions and rivalries within the labour movement. There is definite pressure applied at times, both by the donor union and by researchers who identify with its cause to eschew objectivity and to employ partisan vocabulary as an indication of commitment.

Recognition of the need for descriptive standards as the first step in moving toward automated description has led to significant efforts in the United States, Canada, England, and France. The work done by the National Information Systems Task Force (NISTF) has resulted in publications providing guidance for archivists using the MARC AMC format, including a data element dictionary. This year a grant from the National Historic Publications and Records Commission will make possible a study by a working group at the Harvard College Library which will consider questions of descriptive standards. The Working Group will attempt to identify the issues which need to be considered, determine priorities for action, develop guidelines for evaluating standards, and recommend to the Society of American Archivists a procedure by which standards issues can be considered by the archival profession.[32]

The British Society of Archivists has produced a data standard. However, the work done to date in the United States by NISTF and in the United Kingdom provides definitions of fields rather than standards that can be applied to descriptive practice.[33]

The Canadian response to the need to consider descriptive standards has been direct. Late in 1983, the Bureau of Canadian Archivists received a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRCC) to establish a Working Group on Archival Descriptive Standards whose task was "to produce a set of proposals for adoption by the Canadian archival community in the area of developing standards and guidelines for the description of archival materials."[34] Not surprisingly, at the end of the one-year study the group was not able to publish a set of applicable rules and standards, but it did produce an extremely thoughtful and thorough report containing recommendations for present practice and for future work in the area of description.

Their survey found that authority-controlled subject indexing takes place in less than one-half of Canadian archives and that, in addition, descriptive and indexing practice is "highly idiosyncratic."[35] They strongly urged that more work be undertaken toward developing standards. They highlighted the special problems caused by the inadequacy of available lists and by archivists' lack of formal training in indexing theory and methodology. They recommended that SSHRCC make a further grant to study and investigate the issues and problems in indexing of archival material, and that institutions already committed to indexing use the lists most appropriate to their needs while striving for consistent procedures.[36]

More recently a "Call to Action" has been prepared by the Bureau of Canadian Archivists to inform Canadian archivists of the work being done and to foster interest and discussion. This document points out that it is preferable for archivists to establish standards, and then have software designed to conform to their needs,

rather than to surrender the "integrity of their descriptive practices" in order to conform to available software. It urges the profession to free itself from its traditional antipathy to library descriptive practice and also to recognize that it will have to become more disciplined in its approach to this aspect of its work. The "Call to Action" concludes by cautioning that development of descriptive standards will be slow since the process involves "larger questions of methodology, the application of archival theory and principles to professional practice and administrative control."[37]

Those of us working on the American side of the border can only hope to benefit from the Canadian initiative. Perhaps now that a similar working group has been created in the United States with plans to establish close liaison with the Canadian working group, it might even be possible eventually to create a North American or English language descriptive standard.[38] Separate national standards would seem to undermine the potential of automation.

Much discussion in recent years at the annual Society of American Archivists' Labor History Roundtable has centered on the need for standard subject descriptors for use by American labour archivists. The Labor-Management Documentation Center at Cornell University has been very interested in developing a labour-management thesaurus, but the magnitude of the effort and rapid shifts in available software have been deterrents.[39]

As part of the 1979-1981 redescription project, a labour subject authority file was developed at the Wayne State Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs. The main impetus was the desire to attain consistency within the archives in the use of descriptive vocabulary and to agree upon terms which were clearer to labour historians and others using the collections. The authority list which had been drawn up by the Committee of University Industrial Relations Librarians was helpful in this effort. A hierarchy of terms was created and a syndetic structure was incorporated. However, by the time this work was completed, the need for adoption of an inter-institutional standard had become clear, and the authority file was never imposed as an internal standard, although it is used for guidance on the selection of appropriate terms.

Clearly description is approaching a crossroads; in the next few years, it will be necessary to make some virtually irreversible decisions which will determine the future course of archival practice. Although it is important to move as rapidly as possible, it is also important to hold as our goal attainment of the fullest and most precise description of our collections in a manner that will withstand the test of time.

Labour archivists, as well as those working with other kinds of records, have to recognize that, in some form, redescription of the whole past body of work may be necessary in order to implement automated access.

Notes

1   Joan Rabins, "Records Redux: Enhancing Subject Access through Redescription," *The Midwestern Archivist* VIII, No. 2 (1983), pp. 17-27.

2   For a discussion of the effect of this trend on archival practice, see Dale C. Mayer, "The New Social History: Implications for Archivists," *American Archivist* 48 (Fall 1985), pp. 388-99.

3   Frank B. Evans, Donald F. Harrison and Edwin A. Thompson, compilers, "A Basic Glossary for Archivists, Manuscript Curators, and Records Managers," *American Archivist* 37 (July 1974), p. 421.

4   Theodore S. Hamerow, *Reflections on History and Historians* (Madison, 1987), p. 168.

5   Meyer, "The New Social History," p. 390.

6.   Robert H. Zieger, "Workers and Scholars: Recent Trends in American Labor Historiography," *Labor History* 13 (Spring 1972), pp. 254-56.

7   It must be recalled that 1983 was the year that the National Information Systems Task Force (NSTIF) presented the results of their revision and expansion of the U.S. MARC Format for Archival and Manuscripts Control (MARC AMC).

8   Uli Haller, "Processing for Access," *American Archivist* 48 (Fall 1985), p. 401.

9   David Weinberg, "Automation in the Archives: RLIN and the Archives and Manuscript Control Format," *Provenance* IV (Fall 1986), pp. 12-31, and Nancy A. Sahli, "Interpretation and Application of the AMC Format," *American Archivist* 49 (Winter 1986), pp. 19-20.

10   Most of these packages are chiefly useful for physical control. For reviews by users of seven of these programs see *The Midwestern Archivist* XI, No. 1 (1986), pp. 69-81.

11   It was reported in the *Midwest Archives Conference Newsletter* of July 1987 that the Indiana Historical Society had applied to the NEH for a $327,000 grant to prepare their finding aids for automation. One of the benefits cited was the opportunity to examine and rework the content of current finding aids to provide more sophisticated searching capabilities, pp. 15-16. Conversion to accommodate MARC AMC is discussed in Patricia D. Cloud, "The Cost of Converting to MARC AMC: Some Early Observations," *Library Trends* 36, No. 3 (Winter 1988), pp. 573-83.

12   Steven L. Hensen, "The Use of Standards in the Application of the AMC Format," *American Archivist* 49 (Winter 1986), pp. 31-40.

13   Avra Michelson, "Description and Reference in the Age of Automation," *American Archivist* 50 (Spring 1987), pp. 192-208. This was true even though the Anglo-American Cataloging Rules (AACR2), Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH), and Library of Congress Name Authority File (LCNAF) were followed.

14   Lawrence J. McCrank, ed., *Automating the Archives: Issues and Problems in Computer Applications* (White Plains, 1981), pp. 215-16. There is the primary need to agree on standard description for sharing of bibliographic information and collection administration and there is the separate need to agree on a standardized workable procedure for subject indexing.

15   Michelson, "Description and Reference," pp. 197-98.

16   Marcia J. Bates reported that graduate students in psychology, economics and even librarianship performed at an unacceptable level in conducting subject searches in a Library of Congress subject catalog. "System Meets User: Problems in Matching Subject Search Terms," *Information Processing and Management* 13, No. 6 (1977), p. 374.

17   Lewis Cox, "ACAS: Microcomputer-based Subject Access," *Provenance* IV (Fall 1986), p. 38.

18   Terminology will have to be reconciled between repositories collecting related material but serving different segments of the research public, such as labour archives and corporate archives.

19   A universal subject indexing scheme adopted by the Society of Archivists in England was aborted in the 1970s when it was found that "any scheme which was general enough to be available for common use was too cumbersome for the purpose of any particular archives service." Michael Cook, "Applying Automated Techniques to Archives Administration: A Commentary on the Present Situation and Areas of Likely Progress," *Journal of Documentation* 39 (June 1983), p. 81.

20   David A. Bearman and Richard H. Lytle, "The Power of the Principle of Provenance," *Archivaria* 21 (Winter 1985-86), pp. 14-27.

21   Richard H. Lytle, "Intellectual Access to Archives: I. Provenance and Content Indexing Methods of Subject Retrieval," *American Archivist* 43 (Winter 1980), pp. 64-75, and "Intellectual Access to Archives: II. Report on an Experiment Comparing Provenance and Content Indexing Methods of Subject Retrieval," *American Archivist* 43 (Spring 1980), pp. 191-207. Fifteen identical questions were run twice each using the provenance method and the content indexing method (employing a computerized subject list) for a total of sixty runs. Though both performed rather poorly, the result

was an approximately equal retrieval performance. However, Lytle was surprised that the traditional provenance method proved to be less variable than the content indexing method which has led him to stress the importance of provenance coupled with the experience and the knowledge of the researchers in accessing records. Considering the great variability of archival collections, his sample may not have been large enough to fully support his stress on the value of provenance.

22   Bearman and Lytle, "The Power of the Principle of Provenance," pp. 26-27.

23   Haller, "Processing for Access," pp. 401-2.

24   Mary Jo Pugh, "The Illusion of Omniscience: Subject Access and the Reference Archivist," *American Archivist* 45 (Winter 1982), p. 43. Nancy Sahli, "National Information Systems and Strategies for Research Use," *Midwestern Archivist* IX, No. 1 (1984), p. 11. Sahli strongly urges indexing guides as a rational device to increase research efficiency: "does it make any sense to expect researchers to read through a 150- or 200-page inventory to find specific subject or name references when an index to the finding aid might have been created?"

25   Russell Martin, "Archival Indexing," *Conference Proceedings, ACA McMaster-Hamilton Conference, 1987*, sponsored by the Ontario Association of Archivists, pp. 12-16.

26   Arie Arad, "Semi-automatic Indexing of Archival Lists and Word-frequencies in Such Lists," *ADPA (International Council on Archives)* 3, No. 3 (1981), pp. 15-25. PRECIS (Preserved Context Indexing System) developed in Britain has been used for indexing archival records. File headings are entered on the computer which creates a series of terms through permutation. Martin, "Archival Indexing," pp. 12-15.

27   It is assumed that the content of a folder with the heading "Correspondence, 1968" would have to be deduced from context. Consequently the users of a KWIK index should not assume that it can be used as the sole guide to collection content. Frank G. Burke, "Archives Automation and the Administrator," in Lawrence J. McCrank, ed., *Automating the Archives: Issues and Problems in Computer Applications*, p. 6.

28   Michael Cook, "Applying Automated Techniques to Archives Administration," p. 76. Cook has noted "a procedural individualism which borders upon anarchy" as characteristic of many in the profession.

29   Steven Hensen, "Squaring the Circle: The Reformation of Archival Description in AACR2," *Library Trends* 36, No. 3 (Winter 1988), p. 543.

30   Jean E. Dryden and Kent M. Haworth, "Developing Descriptive Standards: A Call to Action," *Occasional Paper Number One*, Bureau of Canadian Archivists (July 1987), p. 11.

31   Our solution for such records during the redescription project has been to spot index grievances which seemed to be particularly significant in order to alert researchers to the potential of this kind of record, but we could not attempt to do any more than this token effort. This is probably true of case file records generally, whatever their nature.

32   *Descriptive Notes: Newsletter of the Descriptive Section of the SAA* (Summer 1988), p. 3.

33   Working Group on Archival Descriptive Standards, *Toward Descriptive Standards: Report and Recommendations of the Canadian Working Group on Archival Descriptive Standards* (Ottawa, 1985), pp. 24-25.

34   *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

35   *Ibid.*, pp. 46, 53.

36   *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.

37   Dryden and Haworth, pp. 3, 11, 14. The "Call to Action" has been followed by a draft of "The Report to the Working Group on Description at the Fonds Level" which appeared in March 1988.

38   Jean Dryden, "Planning Descriptive Standards," paper presented September 30, 1988 at the Annual Meeting of the Society of American Archivists, Atlanta, Georgia.

39   Correspondence with Martha Hodges, Reference Archivist of the Labor-Management Documentation Center, October 1986, and telephone conversation March 15, 1987. The Center has considered the possibility of preparing a sample disk containing a portion of the list of subject descriptors they have developed, and utilizing a readily available word processing program, to circulate it among sister institutions for purposes of comment and revision. The Committee of University Industrial Relations Librarians, which produced the *Thesaurus of Descriptors for Public Sector Labor Relations* (Ithaca, 1976), is also devoting considerable attention to the problem.