

of impressing the uninitiated? In brief, performing arts archivists need the support, credibility and influence of their peer group, to speak on their behalf, with that promised united voice, into the most receptive ears.

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Postscripts on P.A.R.C.

Further to J. Atherton's informative article "The Origins of the Public Archives Records Centre, 1897-1956" (*Archivaria* 8 (Summer 1979): 35-59) it should be noted that the recommendations to consolidate the management of historical records into one government agency had some currency prior to Douglas Brymner's comments of 1895 (p. 38) and those of Joseph Pope in 1897 (p. 38-40). For in 1892, the *Report of the Royal Commissioners . . . relating to the Civil Service of Canada* stated that:

the Commissioners would call attention to the fact that valuable records of all kinds are left in an insecure condition and liable at any moment to be utterly destroyed by fire. One of the earliest functions of the Civil Service Commission should be an investigation into the whole subject of departmental and other records.

It is further noticed that three departments are charged with the keeping of records, and three separate expenditures are incurred for this object. Votes are taken by the Privy Council Office, and by the Department of the Secretary of State, for the classification of old records, also by the Department of Agriculture for the Dominion Archivist and Assistant. It is recommended that the historic records that have gone out of reference in the work of the departments, be placed in charge of the Dominion Archivist, and only records to which reference is frequently required be kept in the several departments.¹

On another point, the transfer in 1912 of the Public Archives from the Department of Agriculture to the Secretary of State was not as direct as Atherton stated (p. 44). When the Bill respecting the Public Archives was before the House of Commons and the Senate, questions were raised as to which minister was to be responsible for the Archives.² The Prime Minister of the day, Robert Borden, who had long been a defender of the Archives and who had introduced the Bill into the House, considered the possibility of the Archives' administration being placed under the President of the Privy Council. Consequently, when the *Public Archives Act* received Royal Assent on 12 March 1912, the Archives was placed under the control and direction of the Prime Minister. This arrangement lasted for two weeks, then on 25 March 1912 an order in council transferred the Archives to the Secretary of State.³ A few years later a similar arrangement was proposed to Borden by Arthur Doughty but to no avail.⁴ From our current perspective of austerity, increasing archival responsibilities due to privacy and freedom of information legislation and the growth in the power of the Prime Minister's Office, archivists should reflect upon the glory of those two weeks in 1912 and ponder the splendor of the Archives in the Prime Minister's Office.

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- 1 Canada, *Report of the Royal Commissioners Appointed to Enquire into Certain Matters Relating to the Civil Service of Canada, 1892* (Ottawa, 1892), p. xxvi.
- 2 Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, 1911-1912, columns 1494-1497; *Ibid.*, column 6462.
- 3 P.C. 710, 25 March 1912.
- 4 P.A.C. RG 37, vol. 303, file "PAC History" pt. 2, A.G. Doughty to Robert Borden, 23 October 1917.